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8 JULY 1986

Latin America Report



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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

CONTENTS

INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

- Frei Betto Urges Confrontation With 'Imperialist Oppression'
(Frei Betto Interview; EL PERIODISTA, 9-15 May 86)..... 1

BOLIVIA

- Government Reportedly Willing To Hold Dialogue With COB
(EL DIARIO, 5 May 86) 5
- Columnist Points to Urgency of New Investment Law
(Samuel Mendoza; PRESENCIA, 18 Apr 86) 7

CHILE

- Pinochet: Political Laws To Be Implemented in Second Phase
(Augusto Pinochet Interview; QUE PASA, 24-30 Apr 86)..... 9
- Reportage on Civic Assembly Action on 'Chile Demands' Document
(ANALISIS, 29 Apr-5 May 86; CAUCE, 5-11 May 86)..... 18
- Main Grievances Listed
Assembly Approves Text 18
21
- National Accord To Approve Constitutional Reform Proposal
(Juan Jorge Faundes; CAUCE, 28 Apr-4 May 86)..... 30
- National Human Rights Commission Reports New Torture Methods
(CAUCE, 28 Apr-4 May 86)..... 34
- Columnist Views U.S. Political Pressure, Economic Aid
(Carlos Portales; MENSAJE, May 86)..... 36

Episcopal Conference Document Urges Constitutional Reforms (MENSAJE, No 348, May 86).....	40
Communist Party Leader Discusses Leftist Coalition (Luis Guastavino Interview; UNIDAD, 24 Apr 86).....	42
MAPU Leader Barrueto Aims To Achieve Unity of Leftist Forces (Victor Barrueto Interview; ANALISIS, 29 Apr-5 May 86)....	45
Christian Democrat, Communist Leaders Explain Differences (Jose Ruiz Di Giorgio Interview; QUE PASA, 30 Apr-7 May 86).....	49
Cluster Bomb Shipment Reportedly Loaded Onto Iraqi Aircraft (HOY, 28 Apr 86).....	57
Government Unemployment Figures Said To Be Distorted (Estaban Jadresic; MENSAJE, No 348, May 86).....	60
Cochilco President Analyzes Prospects for Copper Industry (Patricio Jarpa Interview; ERCILLA, 23 Apr 86).....	65
Installation of Important Methanol Plant Begins (Rosario Alvarez P.; ERCILLA, 23 Apr 86).....	71

MEXICO

Controversy Envelops Issue of Government Food Subsidies (various sources, various dates).....	73
Key 29 April Statement	73
Losses in Buying Power Described	74
New White Bread Prices	77
Tortibonds Issued	78
Tortibonds Criticized, by Pedro O. Ramirez	80
Assurances From CONASUPO Head	81
Bishops Appeal for Christian Behavior in Political Life (DOCUMENTACION E INFORMACION CATOLICA, 10-17 Apr 86).....	83
Several Grassroots Church Communities Described by Members (CHRISTUS, Mar 86).....	93

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INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

FREI BETTO URGES CONFRONTATION WITH 'IMPERIALIST OPPRESSION'

Buenos Aires EL PERIODISTA in Spanish 9-15 May 86 p 34

[Interview with Frei Betto, Brazilian theologian and priest, by Julio Huasi in Buenos Aires: "Like Jesus, We Suffer Imperialist Oppression"; date not given; passages within slantlines published in italics; first paragraph is EL PERIODISTA introduction]

[Text] Frei Betto, a well-known Brazilian priest and author of "Fidel y la religion," told EL PERIODISTA: "America has a church that legitimizes oppression, even launders dirty money from drug traffic, and it is a church for the poor."

"If the social structures obstruct love and brotherhood, it is a Christian's duty to fight against such structures and their domination over peoples." Frei Betto, a Brazilian theologian and priest, said this during a long interview last week in Buenos Aires with EL PERIODISTA. The Dominican priest was invited by the Foreign Relations Institute, but was only here 30 hours. He introduced the Argentine edition of his book "Fidel y la religion," a thick transcript of his conversations with the Cuban leader "about human and divine affairs and the historic fertility of dialogue between Christians and Marxists in Latin America." Born in Belo Horizonte in 1944, Frei Betto first achieved notoriety by opposing the military regime that overthrew the government in 1964. A political prisoner for 4 years, he was on the verge of death at the end of a 36-day hunger strike "against a dictatorship that tortured and oppressed the people." Now he is one of the most eloquent spokesmen for liberation theology.

He said: "My mental image of God comes from Jesus' public life, a man who died as a political prisoner in Roman-occupied Palestine. As the First Letter of John says, he who loves knows God. However, there is no such thing as Christian love and non-Christian love. There is a single human love in which God is present, whether revealed by a girl in love for the first time, the South African black who rebels against apartheid, solidarity with a Nicaragua under attack, or the love of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo...."

[Question] Can it be said that God loved them but permitted their children to be kidnapped and murdered?

[Answer] It is not that....That is a negation of God's love. The wrath of God falls on the scandalous, dark void created by those kidnappings. God's love is revealed in those mothers' thirst for justice. Liberation theology is not the creation of theologians who come later, but the creation of the Latin American peoples, their liberating experience. The essence of that love, of Jesus, and of that theology is commitment to life. Those who are against life are, by necessity, against Christ. Jesus signifies rebellion against death which is incarnate today in imperialist domination, the injustice of capitalism. That rebellion means that we must live as brothers. As Christians, we must fight against the structures that aid the cause of death in order to create brotherhood, the essence of God throughout history. This is the revolutionary side of Jesus which reappears in Latin America through liberation theology. Jesus did not preach the /church/ but the /Kingdom of God/, which is human transcendence. The construction of that kingdom entails the construction of a society of justice, solidarity, and equality. To believe that the /church/ is more important than the /kingdom/ is pure hypocrisy. The oppressor is the one who causes violence and, therefore, we Christians must confront that oppressor and conquer him.

[Question] Your books mention "loving the oppressor." What does that mean?

[Answer] /Loving him/ in a Christian way means eliminating all structural opportunities for him to continue to oppress, disarming him as an oppressor, helping him achieve human dignity and recognize the /other/ as his brother, not his victim....

[Question] Is that possible in this kingdom?

[Answer] Liberation is possible when the poor fight for a kingdom of justice--that is, love without oppressors.

[Question] There has been a lot of cultural and political syncretism in Latin America, especially in the last three decades of dialogue between Christianity and Marxism. Or is that just a historic illusion?

[Answer] We Latin Americans, as young societies, devour and assimilate all cultures, not just native ones and the Christian influence, but African ones, European rationalism, and Marxism. We assimilate them into our life and our history. Christianity itself is reached by that process. The Christianity that is flourishing on our continent is not like the old church in Europe. The latter is like a museum and does not attract youths or workers. We are less Cartesian and more open to the fertility of life. Therefore, Christians and Marxists encounter each other in the fight for justice. This syncretism is very clear in the experiences of Cuba and Nicaragua. In 1980, the leadership of the Sandinist Front produced the first document on religion by a revolution in power and did it in a positive way. In my long interview with Fidel Castro, the Communist revolutionary developed very advanced ideas that did not come from the old Marxist manuals on religion. Fidel revives Marx' historical dialectical perspective....Fidel is not a Christian, but he has a Christian background. Fidel lives values that, to us, are Christian values. I would say that Fidel is a prophetic man within Marxism, capable of perceiving a new road. I truly feel that the /new man/ in Latin America will be

objectively revolutionary and subjectively mystical, a mixture of Che Guevara and San Juan de la Cruz. I believe that Marxism has not yet fully developed its theory of human subjectivity and that we Christians can make an important and necessary contribution here. A new Latin American is being shaped in Nicaragua. What is most impressive to me is the synthesis by the people with Sandino as the expression of their nationality, Che Guevara as the expression of the continental scope of liberation, and Jesus as the expression of the universality of the fight for justice, the gift of oneself even at the price of death in order to create a just and fraternal life.

[Question] Some people say that liberation theology is Marxist manipulation of Christianity.

[Answer] I know that very well. That is because it is a theology that disturbs Reagan and U.S. imperialism, just as Jesus disturbed the Roman imperialists. One reason is that liberation theology denies the oppressors any religious legitimacy. It gives Christians a critical and revolutionary vision of their own faith. Therefore, Reagan and the /Santa Fe Document/-- which the U.S. oppressors wrote as their Latin American policy--say that it must be fought. They fear and hate it as much they do Nicaragua and Libya.

[Question] Nevertheless, the Latin American peoples see a rich church rather than a poor one....

[Answer] The church has many diseases, but it also has antibodies. There is a church of big banks and many see that church as an accomplice of oppression and imperialism. However, the message of the gospels and, basically, the people is stronger than that. We have about 100,000 Ecclesiastic Base Communities in Brazil with 3 million members (all poor people from the urban slums and the countryside). These were started 25 years ago and were strengthened by the fight against the military dictatorship. They are the seeds of many popular movements of struggle for housing, health, water, human rights, and jobs. Many Catholic bishops acknowledged that they became Christians after coming into contact with these base communities. Why that distinction? Because many Catholics feel they are people of the church but do not necessarily take to heart Christ's message. As these bishops say, the communities are "the new way of life of the church." This is a new church that upsets Reagan and the National Security Doctrine, written by the United States so that the Latin America military would feel fear, suspicion, and hatred toward their own peoples and protect U.S. interests, not those of their own nations. In Belo Horizonte, U.S. official Dan Mitrione taught the Brazilian military methods of torture by applying an electric prod to the skin of street beggars used as guinea pigs. Some soldiers and policemen have sought Brazilian priests and bishops in order to confess their torture and crimes because they could no longer live with their conscience. Reagan likes the Moonies because they are explicitly anti-Catholic although I have been told that they finance certain Catholic universities and organizations in Argentina.

[Question] The Holy See has just lifted its "sanction of silence" against Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff. Why?

[Answer] The Pope was very impressed by the deluge from Christian Base Communities. They sent documents to Rome containing millions of signatures supporting Leonardo. He was also impressed by the favorable press on this priest. This made the Pope see that this problem could no longer be handled as an /internal affair/ of the church. It cannot censure and sanction without paying the price; public opinion was favorable to Boff and unfavorable to the Vatican. Without opening his mouth, Boff said more in this year of silence than ever before. Theology cannot ignore the advances of science and history. No one can accuse those who use mathematics of being Pythagoreans. Why, then, do they accuse us of being Marxists because our liberation theology incorporates concepts revealed to be true by the reality of life, the life of the poor in Latin America?

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BOLIVIA

GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY WILLING TO HOLD DIALOGUE WITH COB

La Paz EL DIARIO in Spanish 5 May 86 p 2

[Text] The government is ready for a dialogue with the Bolivian Labor Federation [COB] in order to respond to its demands within a framework of realism, good sense and responsibility, Information Minister Herman Antelo said.

On being apprised that the labor organization is seeking a dialogue with the government, the minister said that the government is willing to talk to the workers but will not enter into a discussion of factors that may revive hyperinflation or anarchy. "The proposals will be considered by the government within a framework of serious discussion," he said.

The Bolivian Labor Federation is holding a meeting today of its executive committee plus the national leaders of individual unions who will be able to present their points of view on the present economic and social situation of the country.

The labor organization meeting has been called after the failure of a national meeting of leaders last week due to the absence of leaders who have so far not explained how that came about.

Although some authorities in the executive power exclude any chance of success for COB in modifying wage increases planned for next June, union leaders insist that wages have to be revised taking into account the cost of a family basket of goods that must be discussed with the executive power.

COB published a single list of demands that will be presented to the government in the next few hours with the intention of seeking a general increase in wages and salaries, taking into account the current cost of living, and also the restoration of labor benefits, meaning some bonuses that used to be paid prior to the previous administration.

Negotiations

Official sources said that any negotiation with COB would be based on real data that are included in the general national budget and the stipulations of

Decree 21060, an anti-inflationary decision seeking the stabilization of our economy, which is considered serious at this time due to the implications of the crisis.

Minister of planning and coordination, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, and the information minister agreed that any modification of wages and salaries necessarily has to correspond with a realistic policy based on government revenues and expenses.

"We have stated that we recognize the workers' merits," declared Herman Antelo, saying they had contributed a great quota of sacrifice after the measures of last August, but despite that opinion he admitted that the government is not in a position to accede to demands that do not fall within realistic figures, so as to avoid a relapse into hyperinflation.

Audience

The labor leader said they will request an audience with the President, Dr Victor Paz Estenssoro, to whom they will deliver a single national list of demands, consisting of 20 points and containing also a "platform for struggle." The date of the labor leaders' audience may be decided today.

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BOLIVIA

COLUMNIST POINTS TO URGENCY OF NEW INVESTMENT LAW

La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish 18 Apr 86 p 3

[Article by Samuel Mendoza]

[Text] If we really want to get out as soon as possible from the serious economic and social crisis in which we are mired, the most important thing is to promote the reactivation of the nation's productive apparatus. The President has talked about this frequently and so do his ministers. However, this is a time when the instruments to attain this objective remain dormant, either in the executive or the legislature.

A few months ago a mission of OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) was in La Paz. This is the autonomous agency of the United States government that grants direct loans financed by its own resources on the one hand, while on the other it provides guarantees to American banks for them to grant loans to private investors in foreign countries. The Bolivian government very properly signed an agreement with this organization, aware that it was time to attract investment capital to open up new sources of jobs, and above all to reactivate the economic apparatus.

It is superfluous to repeat that there are many capitalists in the United States who want to invest in Bolivia. We were able to verify this personally in October last year when the New York Bolivian-American Chamber of Commerce invited Bolivian Vice-president Dr. Julio Garrett Aillon to a round table in which we also participated. Unfortunately, since then, and since the signing of the agreement with OPIC, little or nothing has been done to foment the investment of capital in our country.

One of the most important instruments to attract capital is undoubtedly an investment law to lay the groundwork for the opening of new sources of production. The capital is there, but it awaits the regulations governing its investment in Bolivia. Since the investment law passed by the government of General Hugo Banzer has been virtually repealed, it is necessary to write and pass a new, updated law to open the doors as soon as possible to private investment, both Bolivian and foreign.

The Confederation of Bolivian Private Entrepreneurs points out quite rightly that there can be no talk of incentives until the investor's confidence is

restored by means of "clear juridical instruments and a firm political will to maintain that juridical order." Consequently, "the task cannot be postponed of having a new investment law that will take into account the new framework set up for the country's economic development, the substantial loosening up that has come about in this area with regard to international commitments made within the framework of subregional integration, and that sets clear and specific standards to strengthen confidence and reduce as much as possible the leeway in its interpretation, within a modern, stable and realistic juridical context."

It is impossible to deny that the statist policy imposed by previous governments has brought about the flight of Bolivian and foreign capital. Knowing that the investor, whether Bolivian or foreign, seeks a climate where he has some guarantees before he ventures into the productive framework of a country, one has to bring about such a climate so as to give him an opportunity to do so and thus contribute to national development. We must insist that Bolivia is virgin territory because it possesses abundant resources that have not been touched due to a lack of investment capital. If Bolivia doesn't have such capital it is right to attract the capital from abroad, even more so when we know that there is such capital in abundance. Otherwise, as the entrepreneurs quite rightly say, "the risk is run that investment will continue to be a distant promise, a prospect that is even more worrisome in the circumstances we are now facing."

There are many important tasks the executive and legislative powers must carry out if they want to get the country out of this crisis. One of these, which cannot be postponed, is to pass a new investment law as an indispensable tool to reactivate the national productive apparatus and open up new roads toward national development and the people's welfare. It is to be hoped that the government and the legislators will understand this.

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CHILE

PINOCHET: POLITICAL LAWS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN SECOND PHASE

Santiago QUE PASA in Spanish 24-30 Apr 86 pp 13-20

[Interview with President Augusto Pinochet by the director of QUE PASA, Roberto Pulido; the managing editor, Patricia O'Shea, and the feature editor, Gloria Stanley; at La Moneda Palace; date not given]

[Text] He looked relaxed and in good health. The day began for President Pinochet at 0700 hours at La Moneda Palace with a recorded television program and a meeting with close colleagues. At 0830 he was ready to breakfast with QUE PASA.

Impeccably dressed in his uniform, he joked readily ("Careful with the tape recorders; everything is bugged nowadays...The other day a fellow asked me why I was so anxious about ordering some medicine; it turns out that I had ordered it while I was riding in my car") as he personally assigned places at the breakfast table. For almost an hour and a half he would converse about a wide range of national issues with QUE PASA's director, Roberto Pulido; its managing editor, Patricia O'Shea, and its feature editor, Gloria Stanley. The president had invited the minister secretary general of government, Francisco Javier Cuadra, and Col Guillermo Garin, the commander of the Royal Guard, to the gathering.

In his own personal style (answering his own questions, raising the tone of his voice or banging on the table when some subject annoyed him, standing up abruptly), Gen Augusto Pinochet offered his thoughts on the past 13 years of government: the present (which his opponents see as a period of severe crisis and polarization and which he sees as years of study and enactment of laws); the past (a struggle with an enemy that gives no quarter, Marxism), and the future ("which must lead to a protected democracy in 1989. And it will prevent us from lapsing into communism again").

One can sense that he is more at ease talking about the past. Or about Marxism. Or about the regime's influence. Or when he jokingly refers to the image that his opponents have of him. "I have a sour face; maybe that's why they say that I'm a dictator. My wife says that I always look annoyed when I talk. It's just that I'm made that way." Or when he rejects the soldier's macho image: "A lot of people think that the only thing we soldiers know how to say is 'yes, sir...forward, march...at ease.' I can tell them this: we

spend 3 years in school, where we study for second lieutenant, lieutenant and captain; then 3 years at the War Academy; 1 or 2 years of teacher preparation, and finally the Superior Command course. That makes 12 years of studies. And this doesn't count the exams that you take every year before the Qualifying Board. I took 35 of them! Can they say then that "these soldiers are crude"? It so happens that our training is different. We do not make deals. We say yes or no. This is the difference between us and politicians."

He categorically rejects the notion that there is a severe crisis and polarization, the diagnosis of the Chilean bishops in their most recent pastoral letter.

He said that "there has never been a consensus in Chile; that's revising history," and asserts that the government is supported by most of the country and that "it remains to be seen what will happen at the moment of truth (1989) with the people who are doing the criticizing now."

As the 1 1/2 hour conversation drew to a close, the issues that we wanted to bring up had not been discussed. "You have enough at this point to fill several pages," the president said, smiling.

A Look Back...To Plan for the Future

An enthusiastic student of history, President Pinochet says that one can never plan for the future without looking back first at the past, especially when analyzing a nation.

We cannot understand Chile in 1973, he says, unless we examine two prior historical dates: 1925 and 1891. "It was in that bloody, prolonged civil war in which so many were killed, with the navy supporting the Portales constitution of 1833 and the army backing President Balmaceda, that the country buried the presidential system of the 1933 Constitution and gave birth to what I call 'parliamentary power.' A Congress made up of the best families in Chile, the aristocracy, which initially lifted it up and then debased it." General Pinochet says that as a result of this parliamentary period serious social problems arose from the depopulation of the countryside and the exodus into the cities: overcrowding, housing shortages, disease and the breakup of families.

"I emphasize these events because they would have repercussions later in Chile and explode in 1973. Instead of investing the wealth they obtained from nitrate, these lawmakers took the first boat to France to squander their fortunes (it's all accurately told in several novels, such as 'The Transplanted'). They thus made possible the later emergence of the populist parties. The Communist Party was born in 1921 precisely in the nitrate fields because no one cared about raising the standard of living of the people working there..."

The president expounds on the lessons of history.

"At the close of this parliamentary period we come to 1924, when the Armed Forces again stepped in, this time the navy and army, and handed over the 1925

Constitution to the country and to President Alessandri. That constitution, which reestablished a presidential system of government, suffered from a series of problems, however. The main one: it did not set ground rules for the political parties, or explain to them what their province was or tell them how far they could go. They thus gradually became stronger than the Legislature and the Executive branch. It was those parties that held power under various governments...No one knew where the money was, how they were really operating and who they consisted of."

The upshot, President Pinochet told QUE PASA, is the development of parties like the Communist Party, which "was going to set up a new colony of Russian imperialism in 1970 in Chile. Like Cuba, we were going to be vassals of the Russian lord."

He then adds emphatically: "This is what prompted the Armed Forces to rise up. It was to save the country...Or do you think that it wouldn't be easier for us to look at the problem from afar instead of fighting in the trenches today and being the target of slander, which is at times the case? In my case, for example, I found my mother, may she rest in peace, weeping a few days before she died because of slander that some rag published."

With a stern gesture the president picked up the thread of his previous remarks. "We were talking about the military uprising. You will probably tell me: 'But in 1973 the members of the Junta signed a document indicating that they would stay on until the political situation returned to normal.'"

[QUE PASA] The famous Proclamation No 5...

Before coming out with an answer, the president made one of those surprise moves with which he regularly disconcerts the people with whom he is talking, saying: "Let's stop here. It's time for tea, isn't it?"

After a brief pause, he resumed our talk with a curt "Let's begin."

[Question] Mr President, you were mentioning Proclamation No 5, which says that the Junta will remain as long as necessary until things return to normal. What changed afterwards?

[Answer] General Mendoza, General Leigh, Admiral Merino and I signed a document that said that. But don't forget that that was when the movement had just concluded. When we started taking a look at things and analyzing the problems (the courts, the comptroller's office, Congress, the institutions), we reached the conclusion that the problem was much, much more deep-rooted than we had imagined.

We realized that we had to draft a new constitution, because the 1925 Constitution had been unable to stem the action of Marxism-Leninism. The comptrollership had been overridden by the decrees of insistence. And Congress, well everyone knows what it was like. The rulings of the courts were not being obeyed. There were problems everywhere. The political parties did whatever they wanted, ran the country by brute force and were accountable to no one. Were the Christian Democrats who worked out the Statute of

Guarantees with the communists accountable to anyone? It was thus necessary to pass a law that would enable us to establish responsibilities. [end of answer]

A Dictatorship?

The objectives of the military uprising and of the action that the Armed Forces and the forces of law and order had to take in 1973 are being blurred by certain sectors, the president asserts. As far as the chief of state is concerned, the people most to blame are the Marxists, "who are very skillful with semantics." They switch words around. "Enemies are adversaries. The other day it said in the papers: 'Carabinero executed.' Executed? Pursuant to what sentence? He was murdered! But they succeeded in using another word, because 'murdered' has less of an impact than 'executed.' It is these sectors, along with other political ones, that have lost their previous dominance, that no longer receive the funds they used to and have become anonymous; these are the people who are saying: 'Democracy now.' There really is a choice here: 'Communism or democracy,' not 'dictatorship or democracy,' as they are saying."

"I'm told that we have very strict laws...Yes, but we're a democracy. There is an Executive Branch, and it's independent. The Legislature is over there (motioning with his hand), and it's not true that it's just four people...Many people are involved, if you count the commissions. And the Judiciary is completely independent, and we made it a special point to accord it the status it deserves. No one can dispute this; it has been acknowledged by the chief justice of the Supreme Court himself. So, is this a dictatorship? We ourselves marked off the field and said that we were going to draft a constitution, which we began looking into in October 1973...We set a national goal for ourselves at the outset of the government, we set the policies, the parameters, the working programs of the ministries, we approved the Constitutional Papers. Do you think that a dictatorial government is going to give up its power for love of art?

"We were the ones who created a framework so as not to end up in a dictatorship! Here, for example, the comptrollership can send back decrees to this 'dictatorial' government. This government has never questioned court rulings; it enforces them strictly.

"Didn't we propose a constitution that was approved in 1980 by the country because we wanted the full-fledged rule of law to prevail? Oh, but it has those temporary articles, you say! I ask you: Can we rush into it just like that or is it better to prepare? You have to study, delve deeply, analyze, reflect on and, if possible and time permitting, even take a look at a fictitious situation and work with it under the law to see how it performs..The laws are being drafted. Among others, we have approved the Constitutional Tribunal Law. And now, before the Political Parties Law, we will have the Voter Registration Law to register people as they ought to be."

The Second Stage of the Regime

[Question] Mr President, there are 3 years left before the constitution takes full effect, and more than 3 years have passed since it was approved. Constitutionalists assert that a country that is not enforcing its legislation is not institutionalized. Given that laws and institutions take time to function, don't you think that these laws should be implemented sooner?

[Answer] You have to look at the problem this way. The program that was worked out in 1980 has several phases. The present stage is for the drafting of the laws. Comprehensive implementation comes during the second stage.

[Question] You mentioned that the government had taken steps to limit its own power...

[Answer] Yes, but even so they talk about "Pinochet the dictator." And "Pinochet the dictator" sends decrees, for example, to the comptrollership, which tells him: "They are not acceptable." Shouldn't the comptrollership close its eyes and sign for the "dictator"? Is that really being a dictator?

[Question] But the transition is a process or a period...

[Answer] A period for implementing the 1980 Constitution, a period for completing the modernizations. Because a great many things have been done here. This really is a different country than in 1973!

[Question] But this period...

[Answer] Is a period of adjustment...

[Question] Or of rapprochement. The interior minister spoke on 11 March of rebuilding the 1973 consensus...

[Answer] Yes, in the sense of a "majority." Look, I'll tell you something about consensus...So many people use the word! Consensus...the magic word. History tells us the following: There has never been a complete consensus! Shortly after Pedro de Valdivia arrived in Chile, he had to hang Pedro Sanchez de la Hoz, because he rebelled...The Dominicans fought with the Mercedarians..The Jesuits with the Dominicans...the Larrains with the Errazuriz...When has there been a consensus? People have been fighting since independence: O'Higgins with Carrera...All you have to do is read history.

[Question] But there was a consensus in 1973...

[Answer] But it was a consensus because the great majority of Chileans were suffering. They were losing their freedom. It was a great majority. That is the meaning of the word.

[Question] And do you think that you have a majority behind you now?

[Answer] Do I have a majority? The government has broad civic support.

[Question] What polls are you referring to? Because the ones published in the papers say otherwise...

[Answer] Ah well, it depends on how the question is posed! If you ask me: Which do you prefer? Dictatorship or democracy? I'll say democracy right away. But my question to you is: Democracy or communism? What answer would you give me? Now then, there are a great many people who are against the government because of all the jabbering going on. But let's see what happens when the time to decide rolls around.

[Question] But there are several years left to pass laws before 1989. What is the strategy for such legislation?

[Answer] Can I tell you a secret? (he says, laughing). When you pursue a strategy, you tell no one; you just pursue it...The laws have to be out before 11 September 1988...

Political Parties

[Question] You have indicated that the purpose of dissolving the political parties was to create a legal framework for them to prevent them from becoming polarized, as they did in the past. With the political opening in 1983 the political parties began operating "de facto." Don't you think that if you do not give them a proper legal framework soon, the parties will wind up making the same mistakes that led to their suspension?

[Answer] You are the ones who have given the political parties life! Pardon me for saying so (he says sarcastically). Newsmen have given them life; it has not been the government. As far as I'm concerned, these are "political groups." But the press likes to fan the flames and calls them political parties.

[Question] But how does the government want the political parties to operate in the future?

[Answer] As currents of opinion that can bring people together and say to them: "Look, gentlemen, I have this program and we're going to implement it like this." For example, this government promised housing, and we're now almost at 800,000 units...We promised telephones and we've almost reached our goal. Nothing has been left up in the air. The currents of opinion have to do the same. They should say: "We will respect private property and individual freedom." They will thus be acting responsibly.

[Question] You said that there has never been a consensus in Chile, only majorities and minorities. Couldn't the government try to channel these majorities and minorities towards a common goal? Couldn't some thought be given to negotiations? Who in your mind would be valid participants?

[Answer] The people...

[Question] And who are the people?

[Answer] The sovereign people, as the constitution and the laws so define.

Future Democracy

President Pinochet tackled the issue of the future democracy enthusiastically:

[Pinochet] The democracy that we want for the country will be protected and have authority. Otherwise, it will become corrupted one day...Because Marxism is made for the infiltration and destruction of democracy.

[Question] But your concept of democracy is different from the one in traditional democracies. The United States, for example.

[Answer] Of course it's different, because the cure depends on the illness. For example, if you have typhus, you don't take penicillin. The Americans never went through what we did. They have how many? Three percent communists? Almost nothing! But we have 20 or so percent who allow themselves to be influenced by the communists. That is the difference. Here it does no good to give the patient penicillin. We have to take a different approach. If you have a gangrened arm or hand, it has to be amputated, doesn't it?

Now then, if you say to me: "Democracy must be pluralist," I say: "Agreed. But the Marxists have to tell me likewise and do likewise." You have to understand the Marxists; they're different. Imagine that I have here in my hand a bar with everything from philosophy to Gorbachev. But they don't show all of it. They show only a part. And they adapt to circumstances for the rest.

This is why they're talking about detente again now. Because action would have to be taken in Chile. In a year or 2 the country is going to be worse off than on 10 September 1973.

[Question] Will the country never be rid of the menace of Marxism?

[Answer] Read "The Decisive Day." In it I say: "The only way to deliver ourselves from Marxism is by preparing our young people and telling them clearly what Marxism is." I say this on page 63. I'm not saying anything new.

Do you think that Andre Gide and the others who became disillusioned didn't realize what Marxism was, what the dictatorship of the proletariat was? The judicial mechanisms so that Marxism does not arise in Chile are in the constitution, and therefore it has to be implemented fully.

From Crisis to Recovery

[Question] The government's economic policy during this period has been to emphasize economic freedom. What is the bottom line on the past 13 years of economic policy?

[Answer] When we took over the government in 1973, there was only enough flour for the next few hours. The till was empty; checks were being returned for insufficient funds; there was total collapse. There were lines for buying cooking oil, flour, fuel, bread and meat. There was disguised unemployment because companies that could take on 100 workers had payrolls of 1,000. Government agencies were bloated. So, the 2nd year we got together in Vina del Mar and agreed on a policy that some call a "shock" treatment, an emergency or adjustment policy to relieve this situation. The question that can be asked now is: Was that policy good or bad? I think that in the final accounting the policy was good. It must be remembered that we had to tackle certain aggravating circumstances. We left the Club of Paris. When we went there to negotiate, they said something like this to us: "Gentlemen, when are you going to return to democracy?" That proved that they were completely in the dark about Chile's situation. So, I told Minister Cauas: "No more negotiations. The negotiation with the Club of Paris is over. We're not going to get down on our knees." And then, of course, came the oil crisis and later the copper crisis. And finally the international banks invaded us with their dollars. The problem is that while some of the people who received that money were honest, there were others who were not that honest or honest in their own way. And we didn't exercise the sort of control we should have. That was the mistake. The economic policy we selected was good, but there were not enough signposts. We have now gotten over the crisis, which beset everyone, not just us. I'm not saying that we're doing wonderful, but we are recovering. The future? I'm not a Cassandra; I can't predict it, but our pragmatic economic policy and its serious and responsible management are yielding results. There is growth. That is a fact.

[Question] But we are still dependent on foreign loans, which have political strings attached. How can the government act with political independence when in one way or another it is linked to international credit?

[Answer] There is no such link. The government feels that our creditors are going to respect our position. It is in their interest to give us credit facilities. Moreover, Chile has fulfilled all of its commitments since 1973.

The Volio Report

[Question] Mr President, what is your opinion of the Volio Report and the resolution of the UN Human Rights Commission?

[Answer] I was always very skeptical about Mr Volio's visit, considering previous experiences. Nevertheless, it was authorized because we have nothing to hide. His report does not reflect the actual human rights situation in Chile. In general, his sources of information are politically biased, and thus he could not be objective.

[Question] Don't you think that mistakes may have been made in the area of human rights during this period?

[Answer] You have it great in this country today...You can take your kids to school without incident, walk the streets, not have to stand on line to buy bread or meat...Your mind is at ease. In 1973, in contrast, there were about

30,000 weapons in the country, distributed around Santiago. Or do you think that the people who fought, who took part in that attempted communist revolution were going to remain quiet? We didn't run across any saints on 11 September. We have found documents from the extremists that convincingly show that, for example, a son-in-law was supposed to kill his father-in-law.

[Question] You are touching on the issue of national security. What are the limits of that policy?

[Answer] The defense of the nation. If you're going to plant bombs, I have to defend myself...

[Question] Bishop Camus said some time ago that the ethics of the national security policy are not the same as Christian ethics...

[Answer] I've been familiar with Bishop Camus' ideas since he was very young, over there in Valparaiso. I greatly regret that he said that because I respect him and pray a great deal for him.

[Question] It has been said that power is very lonely, that a leader is ultimately alone in exercising his authority. How have these 13 years in government been for you?

[Answer] Do you want me to tell you? I've never thought about it. Look, an officer starts preparing for the loneliness of command from the time that he is very young. I was educated from childhood to confront this kind of loneliness. I'm trained for it. What can I do about it?

[Question] But do you trust or mistrust people? Do you prefer to follow your intuition?

[Answer] I trust no one (he says, laughing roguishly).

[Question] And what about the civilian population? Do you see any heirs to your regime?

[Answer] The ones who in one way or another have worked alongside us.

We members of the Armed Forces and the forces of law and order are going to return to our barracks with peace of mind. Of course we are never going to accept a situation like in 1973. If it had not been for God's help, the uprising that enabled us to take care of our problems would not have occurred...I don't know what we would have done...I don't know what would have happened to us as a nation.

8743
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CHILE

REPORTAGE ON CIVIC ASSEMBLY ACTION ON 'CHILE DEMANDS' DOCUMENT

Main Grievances Listed

Santiago ANALISIS in Spanish 29 Apr-5 May 86 pp 10-11

[Text] While the country plodded along amid the irate speeches of the commander in chief, while people were being arrested and shot in counterdemonstrations as he toured the southern part of the country, and while in colleges students and professors waged a resolute battle demanding an end to the intervention, the Civic Assembly was officially constituted in Santiago on Saturday the 26th.

Representatives from 250 social organizations with close to 3 million members and a hundred or so guests with observer status were all set to take part in a gathering whose purpose was the signing of the so-called "Chile Demands" document. As this issue went to press, the organizers were still waiting for official permission from the military authority in the Metropolitan Region to stage the event at Carlos Cariola Theater starting at 0900 hours. Nevertheless, ANALISIS was told, the organizers had provided for at least six alternate sites for the ceremony, including some outside Santiago. Noon had come and gone on Friday the 25th, and one could still see members of the Organizing Committee nervously arriving and leaving as they finalized details while reporters looked increasingly forward to seeing the contents of the document, which was said to embody the aspirations of the great majority of civilians.

The drafting of the document had been completed on Thursday the 24th, and it bore the signature of representatives from the 18 organizations that make up the Council of the Civic Assembly: the Federation of Professional Associations; the Coordinating Committee of Professors Associations; the National Command of Workers; the Democratic Central Organization of Workers; the Council of Students Federations; the Chilean Educators Association (AGECH); the Confederation of Retail Trade; Women for Life; the General Confederation of Cooperatives; the National Peasant Commission; the Human Rights Commission; AD [Democratic Alliance]-MAPU [United Popular Action Movement]; the Group of Constitutional Studies; the National Union of Pensioners; the Federation of Truck Owners; the Coordinator of Shantytown Residents, and the Coordinator of Craft Unions.

Steps Towards Unification

The Civic Assembly was founded just a month after the Federation of Professional Associations issued its call on 25 March during a ceremony at Cariola Theater. The council was formed a few weeks later, and work got under way on drafting the joint "demand" on the basis of the documents that were submitted by the 18 nationwide organizations that took up the initiative. These organizations, in turn, comprise some 250 rank and file groups. This was the origin of "Chile Demands," a 12-page foolscap paper document that was to be submitted to the assembly for ratification as a proposal from the council.

"Chile Demands" comprises a wide range of sector and general grievances (see box) based on a common aspiration: democracy for Chile. "We have come to the conclusion that this government is incapable of fulfilling our most basic grievances and our most urgent demands," the document says, adding: "Therefore, our main grievance as the Civic Assembly is the restoration of national sovereignty to establish democracy." The point is made again later: "We demand democracy because we aspire to a form of free coexistence that is based on the will of the people and on the right of Chile to self-determination...We are convinced that to surmount the national crisis and prevent a fratricidal confrontation, we need a government that enjoys broad popular support and solid democratic representation. The present government lacks civilian backing, and its legitimacy is questioned by the citizenry."

"Chile Demands" begins by setting forth the problems that are besetting Chilean society and that have plunged it into a deep economic, social, political and moral crisis. It speaks out against the regime's obvious inability to overcome the serious situation facing the country and proposes specific measures for ending the crisis. As it has been drafted, "Chile Demands" represents a challenge to the Pinochet government, because if no real response is forthcoming in 1 month's time, the signatory organizations are prepared to chart a joint course to achieve their common goal: the advent of democracy.

In the event that the regime fails to respond, there is talk of the need for a nationwide work stoppage, as was proposed by the president of the Federation of Professional Associations, Dr Juan Luis Gonzalez, at the time the call for the assembly went out. The National Command of Workers, one of the participants in the council meeting, has already agreed to call for a work stoppage during the first half of the year and was to propose as much to the assembly.

Yet to be decided is the substance of the final demand. Some of the options being bandied about were: demand Pinochet's resignation; call for a plebiscite to decide Chile's constitutional destiny, or call for general elections of a president and a National Congress with constituent powers.

"Chile Demands"

The following are some of the main grievances that civilians are voicing to the military regime:

- Establishment of a food allowance for extremely poor homes and a cancellation of debts on basic consumer services such as water and electricity.
- Creation of a massive program for the construction of low-cost housing.
- Repeal of the new Health Care Law and a significant increase in funding for the health care sector.
- Elimination of all forms of job insecurity by means of guarantees to regulate employment stability.
- Correction of the arbitrary facets of the current social security system.
- A final, equitable and comprehensive solution to the indebtedness problem of the productive business sectors, carriers, mortgagors, SERVIU and ANAP.
- Implementation of a vast employment program aimed at creating productive, stable and fairly paid jobs.
- Equality before the law and in employment for women, who have traditionally been held back.
- Recognition of and respect for social organizations.
- Recovery of the public corporation status of professional associations.
- Repeal of the Labor Plan and reinstatement of the Labor Court.
- Reinstatement of Law 16,625 on peasant farmer unionization.
- An end to the appointment of neighborhood leaders, and the election of Neighborhood Boards and other community organizations by the workers.
- Recognition of all the democratically elected student federations and respect for their right to participate in the universities' professional associations.
- Creation of the Higher Council of Land Transport with the participation of the public and private sectors.
- An end to the privatization and municipalization of education.
- Restoration of full autonomy for universities.
- Reestablishment of freedom of expression and of the press; an end to all types of censorship.
- Reparations for the victims of torture and for the family members of persons who were killed, executed or arrested and still missing, and for exiles, who have been deprived of their right to live in their homeland.

--Repeal of temporary Article 24 of the constitution and an end to all states of emergency.

--An overhaul of the Judiciary to guarantee an effective defense of civil rights.

--Dissolution of the National Information Center and real protection for the security of every Chilean.

--Release of the Chileans being held for political reasons.

--Enforcement of the measures proposed by the National Accord in connection with human rights.

--Abolition of the ill-termed "national security doctrine."

--A comprehensive rescheduling of foreign debt servicing.

"In order for our homeland to regain its devotion to freedom and self-determination,"

--All agencies and branches of government must exercise their powers within the strict framework of a democratically legitimized constitution.

--There must be an effective separation of powers so that they can check and balance each other in accordance with the law.

--The Judiciary must be composed of independent courts...and not be interfered with by the other branches.

--A new set of institutions must redefine the legal framework of the Armed Forces and the Carabineros, so that it expressly provides for their observance of a democratically legitimized constitution, their subordination to elected authorities, their incorporation into national development tasks and their mission of safeguarding the country's integrity.

Assembly Approves Text

Santiago CAUCE in Spanish 5-11 May 86 (Insert)

[Text] The council of the National Civic Assembly, made up of the legitimate representatives of the 18 most important social organizations in Chile, unanimously approved the following text of the document called "Chile Demands."

There are times in the life of a country when a serious crisis affords it a unique opportunity to regain its bearings and to emerge strengthened as a nation.

When a people weighed down by years of exclusion and neglect decides to take its destiny into its own hands to restore all of its trampled rights, it is exercising the most elementary right to life, as individuals, as a nation and as a culture.

Chile today is in the midst of a deep political, economic, social and moral crisis. The government closes its doors to accord and dialogue and responds by intensifying the repression. It offers no solution to the distressing problems that accumulate day after day. A huge foreign debt weighs us down. Close to a third of the population is condemned to joblessness and hunger. Domestic indebtedness has stolen years of hard work from individuals and companies, making the situation untenable for production sectors, businessmen, carriers and mortgage holders. The housing shortage is close to one million units. Our systems of health care and education, which were a source of national pride and an example to the rest of Latin America, are falling apart and being dismantled. Labor legislation seeks only to atomize and restrict the legitimate expression of worker grievances. It would take too long to list all of the serious problems besetting us. But the government clings to an economic model and a political agenda that leads only to the perpetuation of General Pinochet in power by recourse to violence.

The overwhelming majority of Chileans realize the gravity of the problem and how this situation has brought about a mounting disintegration and polarization of society. Insecurity and uncertainty are signs of the same problem.

If this situation continues, it is easy to foresee a growing confrontation in which the Armed Forces would be irreversibly committed to repression of such magnitude that it would divorce them once and for all from the people, thus jeopardizing their own institutional status.

In this tragic hour it is our responsibility as patriots and democrats to salvage the constitutional tradition of the Armed Forces and their subordination to a civilian government born of the people.

It is thus a hopeful sign that various social sectors and organizations are uniting to seek and propose a solution that will prevent Chile from disintegrating as a nation. We think that it is possible today; tomorrow it may be too late.

It is a difficult road, but not an impossible one if we are able to travel it together, involved and united.

In the face of the tragic situation in which our homeland finds itself, together we want to perform an act of confidence.

Confidence in this country's most valuable asset, which is none other than the intelligence, talent and strength of its people. But under the current circumstances this is not enough unless it is accompanied by involvement and solidarity. In the face of the exclusion of the masses and of the intermediate bodies on the national, regional and community level, we are calling for involvement and solidarity so that united we can put forth the great national effort that will enable us to overcome the current crisis.

Each of our organizations has struggled separately for a long time to have our demands met, but no real answers have been forthcoming. The time has come for us to unite our grievances and our struggles, thus creating permanent bonds of solidarity and mutual support.

We invite all inhabitants of the country to rally in support of the proposals of the Civic Assembly so that we can thus together begin rebuilding Chile in democracy and freedom.

We have come to the conclusion that this government is incapable of fulfilling our most basic grievances and our most urgent demands.

Therefore, our main grievance, as the Civic Assembly, is the restoration of the people's sovereignty to practice democracy.

Only under a democracy is it possible to begin rebuilding the country in an involved, responsible and united manner.

Only under a democracy are governments obliged to respond to the problems and aspirations of their peoples.

Only under a democracy will we be able to make the changes that will insure respect for human dignity and a civilized coexistence.

Only under a democracy will we be able to fulfill the most urgent demands of the various sectors.

At the same time that we struggle for democracy, we will continue to apply pressure and to mobilize permanently for answers to the problems plaguing us.

Therefore:

I. We Demand Democracy to Guarantee a Decent Life for All Chileans

Chile's future as a community that can meet the challenges facing it is predicated on assuring all its inhabitants the right to a decent existence. To this end it is necessary:

1. To eliminate the living wage and to replace it with an adjustable minimum income that will insure that families can afford the shopping basket of basic items.
2. To establish a food allowance for extremely poor homes and forgive debts on basic services such as water and electricity.
3. To establish a massive low-cost housing construction program to gradually diminish the country's tragic housing shortfall.
4. To repeal the new health care law and to significantly increase government funding for the health care sector so as to improve hospital infrastructure and the quality of care, which are in particularly bad condition today.
5. To eliminate all forms of job insecurity through guarantees of stable employment.
6. To correct the arbitrary aspects of the current social security system by establishing a single scale of steps, wages, pensions and annuities that is applicable to all civil servants, whether they are civilian or military, and, if possible, to workers in the private sector.
7. To secure for those involved in temporary government unemployed-worker programs the same rights that labor and social security legislation provides for workers in the production sector: employment contracts, minimum wage, withholding and family allowance, union organization and collective bargaining, etc.

8. To develop a definitive, equitable and comprehensive solution to the problem of indebtedness in the productive sectors of business, carriers and mortgage holders, SERVIU and ANAP.

II. We Demand Democracy to Put an End to Exclusions

We want democracy to lessen the huge inequalities between a wealthy, powerful minority and a poor, excluded majority, to guarantee the participation of all in the country's life and to end the exclusion of the majority, which is jeopardizing the integrity and unity of our nation.

To this end, it is necessary:

1. To implement a vast employment program aimed at creating productive, stable and well-paid jobs. This program must be developed with input from the government, the private sector and unions. Expanded public works projects, subsidies and business tax incentives to create new jobs are some of the instruments that ought to be used for this purpose.
2. To establish equality before the law and in employment for women, who have traditionally been held back.
3. To recognize and respect the social organizations in the performance of their functions, in the defense of their members and in the exercise of the right to petition and demand.
4. To restore the public corporation status of professional associations and their powers to monitor professional ethics, to set fees and to have input in the formulation of sector policies.
5. To recognize the rights of the workers and the autonomy of their organizations, to which end it is necessary to repeal the Labor Plan and to reinstate the Labor Court, negotiations by production branch, the tripartite commissions and the wage schedules by production branch. Agreements No 87, 98, 137 and 151 with the ILO must also be ratified.
6. To reinstate Law 16,625 on peasant farmer unionization; to extend the right to organize and negotiate to all peasant farmers, including part-time workers; to grant technical and financial assistance to small and medium-sized farmers.
7. To encourage the full incorporation of religious, cultural or ethnic minorities, the Mapuche people in particular, into the national democracy; to immediately repeal Decree-Laws 2,568 and 2,750, which divide and subdivide the Mapuche communities.
8. To end the appointment of neighborhood leaders and to let local residents elect Neighborhood Boards and other community organizations, by fully reinstating Law 16,880 on Neighborhood Boards and Community Organizations.
9. To recognize all democratically elected student federations and to respect their right to participate in professional associations at universities.
10. To repeal all of the provisions that transfer to taxpayers obligations and duties that are the exclusive responsibility of the State, in particular, those connected with Form 29, invoices and customs clearance documents.

11. To immediately repeal the recent law that imposes a specific tax on fuels.
12. To establish a Higher Council of Land Transport, made up of the public and private sectors, to draft guidelines for sector policy.
13. To promote and support, with technical and financial assistance, the development of a social economy sector consisting of cooperatives, self-managed enterprises and other forms of participatory and low-income-earner enterprises.

III. We Demand Democracy for the Development of a Pluralist System of Education and Culture

Culture and education, in all their dimensions, are the foundation on which the nation is built. Ideological sectarianism and the commercialization of schooling, the arts and the mass media currently represent grave threats to the country's future. Therefore, it is essential:

1. To end the trend towards the privatization and municipalization of education because it has led to the disintegration of the school system, with serious harm to students, teachers and, ultimately, the country as a whole.
2. To give the universities back their full autonomy, thus putting an end to the system of the rectors delegate.
3. To increase government funding for education to insure improved basic, intermediate and professional-technical schooling; to modify the university financing system by making it compatible with the objectives of institutes of higher learning and with democratized access to them, especially by expanding government loans.
4. To guarantee pluralism throughout the school system by banning all forms of exclusion because of philosophical, religious or ideological convictions.
5. To develop, with input from the organizations that represent workers in the field of culture, a policy to safeguard the country's artistic and cultural heritage and to look after artistic creativity and progress.
6. To reestablish freedom of the press and to abolish all forms of censorship of the mass media.
7. To modify the status of television channels so that programming of a higher cultural level is assured and the views of all the main schools of thought in the country are aired in an undistorted manner. In particular, Channel 13 ought to broadcast the bishops' repeated calls for national reconciliation as the country prepares to welcome John Paul II.

IV. We Demand Democracy to Redress the Most Flagrant Injustices

Reconciliation among Chileans will not be a reality unless the victims of the greatest injustices receive redress. Therefore, it is essential to take steps to provide redress especially to:

1. The victims of torture and the families of individuals who were killed, executed or arrested and are still missing.

2. The individuals who have been dismissed from their jobs or expelled from their places of study because of their democratic convictions.
3. The youths and other individuals who, owing to the lack of work or opportunities for study, have fallen prey to prostitution, crime and drug addiction.
4. The retirees whose pensions and other social security benefits have been denied them.
5. Exiles, who have been deprived of their right to live in their homeland.

V. We Demand Democracy to Insure Respect for Human Rights

Complete respect for human rights demands the following immediate measures:

1. Repeal of temporary Article 24 of the Political Constitution and an end to all states of emergency and to all violent methods of maintaining law and order.
2. Overhaul of the Judiciary to guarantee an effective defense of civil rights; an end to the system of "Establishment" lawyers and effective enforcement of the civil rights injunction [recurso de amparo] and of the rights to due process and to a defense.
3. Dissolution of the CNI [National Information Center] and real protection for the security of each Chilean.
4. Release of the Chileans detained for political reasons.
5. Implementation of the measures proposed in the National Accord in connection with human rights.
6. Official promulgation and publication of the International Pact on Human and Political Rights passed by the United Nations.
7. Ratification of the UN convention on the elimination of all discrimination against women, passed in 1979.

VI. We Demand Democracy to Reestablish National Independence

Our homeland needs to reestablish its national independence, overcome the international isolation that we are suffering from owing to human rights violations, reverse the denationalization of our economy and reconcile the Armed Forces with the civilian population.

To this end:

1. All of the recommendations approved during these years by various UN agencies must be implemented.
2. The so-called "national security doctrine" must be abolished, because it has disturbed our normal forms of social coexistence. We must also develop a doctrine for the military institutions that emphasizes their foreign defense function and their respect for the people's sovereignty.

3. Chile must return to a policy of coordinating with the countries of Latin America and the Third World so that together we can tackle the problems of foreign indebtedness, the defense of our raw materials' prices and the establishment of a new international economic order.

4. The servicing of the foreign debt must be thoroughly rescheduled, so that export earnings and foreign exchange are earmarked mainly for solutions to domestic problems.

VII. We Demand Democracy to Reestablish the Rule of Law

The people's sovereignty must be reestablished without restrictions in Chile, to serve as the foundation for the rule of law, as enshrined in new democratic institutions, so that our homeland can regain its devotion to freedom and self-determination.

No consideration can postpone the right of all Chileans to elect our government officials in periodic elections based on a free, equal, informed and secret ballot, thus assuring changes in government.

To this end:

1. All agencies and branches of government must exercise their powers within the strict framework of a democratically legitimized constitution.

2. There must be an effective separation of powers so that they can check and balance each other in accordance with the law, without any one having control over another.

3. The Judiciary must be composed of independent courts that have an obligation to safeguard and protect the rights of individuals and that can act without the interference of the other branches, with full authority to hear and decide all cases without exemptions, extraterritoriality or prohibition from trying any matter.

4. Laws must represent the will of the people, be approved by elected representatives and be publicized in such a way that all segments of society can enhance them by voicing their opinions.

5. The law must be enforced equally on authorities and private citizens.

6. A new set of institutions must redefine the legal framework of the Armed Forces and the Carabineros so that it expressly provides for their observance of a democratically legitimized constitution, their subordination to elected authorities, their incorporation into national development tasks and their purpose of safeguarding the country's integrity.

We have made an effort to interpret the main demands of the civilian population.

We realize that the implementation of the socioeconomic measures entails a high cost.

We also know that the country's resources are limited. Nevertheless, this assembly represents the formation of a broad national consensus for starting down the path of national reconstruction and making headway as a country. We realize that in a democracy that can assure the involvement of all, citizens are willing to make great efforts and sacrifices.

Current social and economic priorities must be reordered, with emphasis on solving our most urgent problems.

To this end, we need a policy to reallocate resources and rechannel spending; this entails the following steps, among others:

--A comprehensive rescheduling of the country's foreign debt to stop the new transfer of funds overseas and also to provide a final solution to the distressing problem besetting debt-ridden Chilean producers and mortgage holders.

--Reform of the tax system to insure equity, higher revenues and a redistribution of spending.

--Putting an end to government transfers to the financial sector that are sources of profiteering and that strengthen the large economic groups that contribute nothing to the country's development.

--Reduction of defense and domestic security spending as a percentage of the gross domestic product to its level before the conflict with Argentina, in other words, to its 1977 level.

--Use of foreign exchange savings from the fall in world oil prices and interest rates to reactivate the domestic economy and to create jobs, instead of transferring it to foreign creditor banks.

Nevertheless, Chile's fundamental problems are not just economic. The demands posed here reflect the importance that our organizations attach to the full exercise of human rights and to the reestablishment of a state of law and of national independence and sovereignty.

Therefore, just as at other critical times in our history when the consensus of the majority has enabled us to prevail, we are today determined to set aside our legitimate differences for the sake of great national goals.

Accordingly, this assembly solemnly resolves:

To demand democracy, because we aspire to a form of coexistence in freedom that is based on the will of the people and on Chile's right to self-determination.

We are convinced that to surmount the national crisis and prevent a fratricidal confrontation, we need a government that enjoys broad popular support and solid democratic representation. The current government lacks civilian backing, and its legitimacy is questioned by the citizenry.

Therefore, the only alternative is to turn to the people so that they can decide the nation's future.

This is our demand. These are our demands. They represent the hopes of Chile. They constitute the organized decision of Chilean civilians, expressed with the same determination as the patriots showed at the historic 1810 assembly.

8743
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CHILE

NATIONAL ACCORD TO APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROPOSAL

Santiago CAUCE in Spanish 28 Apr-4 May 86 pp 24-26

[Article by Juan Jorge Faundes: "Minimal Reform to Constitution"]

[Text] During General Pinochet's recent tour through the Temuco zone, there were mass counterdemonstrations which were violently repressed. Army troops even fired automatic weapons while the dictator spoke. Gen Pinochet announced that the 1980 Constitution will not be amended. Pinochet argued in his usual style--discrediting his opponents with adjectives not used in any coherent, rational language--that his opponents use "lies and demagoguery to confuse the people." "They speak of dictatorship or democracy and, in that way, cleverly hide their aggression and their totalitarian ideas." That is why the 1980 Constitution "terrifies" (sic) them. Most of his speech concerned the opponents' real motive for demanding amendments to the Constitution: their fear of no longer "receiving money from abroad."

Continuing with his "reasoning," Gen Pinochet said: "What happens is that these politicians--I won't use an ugly word like politicos (he did)--with notable exceptions, only serve the past system of political parties." As a finishing touch, he stated: "How can they revise, how can they change something that has not been fully applied?"

To give an example of the "aggression" and "totalitarian ideas" of the Chilean opposition, we are offering our readers a scoop. The Proposal of Minimal Reform to the Constitution was drawn up by an editorial committee. It will be approved soon by the members of the National Accord for Transition to Complete Democracy. Reading it will clearly show where the aggression and totalitarianism lie and where the real democrats are. Do they lie in the Constitution that suggests that a single candidate appointed by the commanders in chief of the Armed Forces and forces of order be ratified by plebiscite in 1989, or in this proposed reform which suggests convoking general elections for president of the republic and congressmen? These elections would be free, secret, and informed in the purest Western style.

As to financing political parties from abroad--which greatly concerns Gen Pinochet and is /one of the main bases of his argument/ [in boldface]--there is no proposal to change even one comma of the existing law.

The "politicos" who drew up this proposed minimal reform to the 1980 Constitution are as pro-Communist as the MUN [National Unity Movement], the PN [National Party], the DR [Democratic Right], the PDC [Christian Democratic Party], the PSD [Social Democratic Party], and the PS [Socialist Party] of Carlos Briones. The members of the editorial committee were Carlos Reymond (MUN), Tomas Puig (PN), Hector Correa (DR), Francisco Cumplido (PDC), German Urzua (PSD), and Carlos Andrade (PS).

What is the purpose of this proposal by the National Accord? There is no question that the members of the Armed Forces and the forces of order and the remaining supporters of the regime must seriously, calmly, and peacefully reflect on this proposal and on the response that Gen Pinochet has apparently already anticipated.

We have the complete text of the proposed constitutional reform. For reasons of space, however, we will limit ourselves to printing the main paragraphs of the preamble drawn up by this editorial committee. These outline changes to the existing Constitution.

A. Bases of Institutionalism

"Based on the opinion of the National Accord, it is suggested that Article 8 of the Constitution be replaced, declaring unconstitutional those parties, movements, and groups whose objectives, acts, or conduct do not respect the basic principles of the democratic regime and those that advocate or use violence as a method of political action."

B. President of the Republic

"Feeling that the excesses of the presidency affect the required balance for proper democratic stability, we propose eliminating the president's power to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies given to him by the Constitution.

"At the same time, we feel it is appropriate to retain the power that the 1925 Constitution gave to the Senate to approve diplomatic appointments made by the president of the republic."

C. States of Emergency

"On this subject, we point out three proposed changes:

"Repeal of Article 41, No. 3, which negates the right of appeal under states of assembly and martial law and the right of protection under states of emergency in general.

"Martial law is added to the situations that the president of the republic must inform the Congress about, establishing a deadline for this obligation.

"It is proposed to repeal the provision on expulsions from the territory and bans on reentering after the state of emergency that led to this measure is over."

D. Make-up, Election of Chamber of Deputies, Senate

"The committee unanimously agrees to propose that the Senate be made up of 50 members and the Chamber of Deputies 150. It is felt that any fewer could slow down legislative work and make it less efficient and of lower quality.

"It is also felt that all members of Parliament must originate from popular sovereignty, avoiding having congressmen of different rank and representation. Therefore, it is proposed to repeal those provisions that allow unelected members in the Senate.

"It is proposed that the electoral districts elect a minimum of three deputies each and that the regions elect a minimum of two senators each. Deputies and senators beyond these minimums would be elected by districts and regions proportionately, based on their respective populations.

"It was considered appropriate to eliminate the education and residence requirements in order to be elected deputy or senator."

E. Formation of the Law

"Since these are organic constitutional laws or laws that interpret constitutional precepts, the committee feels that the 'majority of the deputies and senators in office' is enough for approval, amendment, or repeal."

F. Constitutional Court

"The committee does not agree with the idea that this court be made up of representatives of the National Security Council. Neither does it agree with the opinion that representatives of the Supreme Court should be elected by successive secret vote.

"It proposes the following make-up for the Constitutional Court:

"Three ministers of the Supreme Court chosen by lot;

"Two lawyers appointed by the president of the republic;

"One lawyer chosen by the Senate; and

"One lawyer chosen by the Chamber of Deputies."

G. Electoral Court

"Going back to the 1925 Constitution, the committee proposes the following make-up of the Election Supervision Court:

"Two ministers of the Supreme Court chosen by lot;

"One minister from the Santiago Court of Appeals chosen by lot;

"One former president or former vice president of the Senate; and

"One former president or former vice president of the Chamber of Deputies.

"Concerning the last two, the committee feels that they should be chosen by lot among those who have held this position for at least for 1 year."

H. National Security Council

"Make-up: It is unanimously proposed that the president of the Chamber of Deputies and the comptroller general of the republic be added as members.

"Powers: The committee proposes elimination of Article 96, Letter b, that authorizes the council to represent the constitutional authorities facing any deed, act, or matter that, in its opinion, seriously attacks the bases of institutionalism or that can compromise national security."

I. Reform of the Constitution

"The committee unanimously supports the repeal of Article 118 that requires approval by the president of the republic and two-thirds of the members of each chamber for certain constitutional amendments."

J. Transitory Provisions

"The majority of the committee proposes the repeal of the 24th provision.

"It also proposes completely replacing the political plan for transition contained in the 24th, 28th, and 29th provisions, establishing a new procedure that the members basically agree on.

"It proposes convoking general elections for president of the republic and congressmen at least 90 days before the expiration of the current presidential term. The president in office is permitted to run for reelection but he must give up his position 6 months before the election. He would be replaced by the head of the Government Junta, according to some, or by the president of the Supreme Court, according to others."

7717

CSO: 3348/555

CHILE

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORTS NEW TORTURE METHODS

Santiago CAUCE in Spanish 28 Apr-4 May 86 p 42

[Text] An alarming new outbreak of torture, using new techniques, has been detected in recent months by the Chilean Human Rights Commission after the UN special reporter, Fernando Volio, turned in his report on violations of basic human rights in our country.

This initial response by the Pinochet Government to the Volio Report has been most dramatic in the Fifth Region.

Between 18 and 19 March 1986, Jorge Carcamo, Roberto Weibel, Carlos Pinto, Abelardo Campos, Alfonso Figueroa, Hector Vega, and Luis Clavero were arrested by personnel of the CNI [National Information Center]. The first six were arrested in public and the last at his private residence.

Methods already known to the public were used for their arrest as well as during the days they stayed at CNI headquarters. The public arrests were made during the day. In order to distract the people in the area, they were made to appear as "mercenaries," accused of stealing wallets and necklaces. Through this technique, passersby did not intervene, especially since they saw that the kidnappers were heavily armed with machine guns.

Those arrested were taken to CNI headquarters on Calle Alvarez in Vina del Mar. The horrors suffered during the 7 days they were in the hands of their captors only became known last week after the Valparaiso Human Rights Commission filed a criminal complaint against the perpetrators of the pressure and torture.

Known Torture Methods...

The complainants state in their brief that they were all subjected to "inhumane, cruel, and humiliating treatment. We suffered the following treatment: being blindfolded at CNI headquarters until taken to the Military Prosecutor's Office on Monday, 24 March; loud music; physical exercises until exhaustion, once doing 300 squats; and suggestions of escape and subsequent execution. We were all forced to sign blank papers or papers we were not allowed to read. We were all photographed and filmed. They did not let us

sleep and we received something to eat only on the third day after we were arrested."

The list of tortures is shocking. Jorge Carcamo indicated: "During some 30 sessions, I was subjected to the application of electric shock all over my body using the following procedure. I was seated on a metal chair with my feet, legs, and hands tied behind the back. Wires were connected to my feet, others to my legs at the thigh and behind the knees, others to my arms, one to my anus, and another to my testicles and penis. Another wire was loose so the torturer could apply it indiscriminately to my mouth, tongue, nostrils, temples, eyes, and ears while the electric current was on."

Abelardo Campos related a new method: "They put some kind of crown with needles on my head in order to apply the electric shock. When the current was applied to the 'crown' and the chair, I had the feeling that the chair was moving from side to side and at times turning. They pressed rubber goggles into my eyes."

Those tortured, now being held in the Santiago Public Jail, are accused of belonging to a military structure of the Communist Party. According to government reports, the area chief is Jorge Carcamo. While he was in the hands of the CNI, he made a film admitting different attacks. The pressure to make the tape was denounced by Carcamo himself in a handwritten letter delivered to his wife: "Under threats of killing me and my family who, according to them, were in their possession, I was forced to make a television tape, advised by specialized personnel. In it, I admitted responsibility for a number of attacks both in Santiago and in the Fifth Region. Also I had to make an appeal to the members and leadership of the Communist Party to 'put aside our arms and our terrorist policy.'"

Carcamo admitted his Communist membership but denied all the charges made by the CNI. He called himself a "democratic fighter, not a terrorist like my captors."

The leaders of the Santiago Human Rights Commission decided to make this situation public in order to avoid what happened on other occasions when, after showing these films, the people have been killed.

7717
CSO: 3348/555

CHILE

COLUMNIST VIEWS U.S. POLITICAL PRESSURE, ECONOMIC AID

Santiago MENSAJE in Spanish May 86 pp 125-127

[Commentary by Carlos Portales]

[Text] The United States Government has made increasingly direct and strong statements supporting the transition to democracy in Chile. It advocates a transition negotiated among "the forces within the government that favor a transition, and the forces within the opposition that favor negotiation . . ."¹

Change in Policy

The signing of the National Accord for the transition to full democracy was regarded by the State Department as "the basis (bases) for a broad consensus among all groups committed to seeking a peaceful and political solution to Chile's problems."² After the National Accord was signed, a change of emphasis became apparent in the congressional testimony of State Department officials in charge of Latin America with regard to the policy toward Chile. Whereas in March 1985 officials contended that "although democracy is our principal objective, our policy reflects the full range of American interests in Chile, and is not determined definitively by just one aspect,"³ last December it was asserted that "/the/ [word enclosed in slantlines printed in boldface] most effective way to achieve the various and diverse objectives of our interest in Chile . . . is to encourage the restoration of democracy."⁴

Another significant change in the use of public diplomacy as a means to achieve more flexibility in the positions of the Chilean government is the shift in votes at the United Nations concerning the observance of human rights in our country. Although the Reagan administration has called attention to the human rights situation in Chile in increasingly outspoken terms, it had taken a stand against the yearly condemnations issued by the UN organizations, on the grounds that a double standard was being applied. As recently as last December, the U.S. representatives voted against such a measure in the UN General Assembly and abstained in the Organization of American States. As a result, any mention of Chile was eliminated from the resolution on human rights at the last OAS General Assembly. The United States had not used the argument of the double standard at the OAS. In contrast, last March at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, the United States called

for a vote on the critical report issued by Special Rapporteur Fernando Volio, and it was unanimously approved. Volio had been appointed a year earlier with U.S. support, and his report paved the way for a resolution urging the Chilean Government to take steps on a series of specific points designed to achieve the full observance of human rights and to change the political regime which is considered to have produced these repeated violations.

Military Ties

As for military ties, the Reagan administration's policy has been to strengthen them through contacts at the highest level. Thus, in 1985 Adm Merino visited the United States twice, and Gen Matthei made another visit. And in November Gen John Wickham, chief of the U.S. Army General Staff, came to Santiago. Efforts to continue these contacts with the Chilean Army suffered a setback when the vice-commander in chief, Gen Sinclair, declined an invitation to visit the United States sometime this year. It should be noted that the embargo on weapons transfers remains in effect until the president of the United States certifies the end of the systematic violation of human rights in Chile, pursuant to U.S. legislation. In spite of that, commercial exports of military materiel amounting to \$964,000 were authorized in fiscal 1985,⁵ and Congress has been asked to allocate funds for fiscal 1986 to renew the International Military Training and Education Program with the Chilean Armed Forces, although the implementation of the program is subject to a prior human rights certification by President Reagan.⁶

Economic Aid

In the economic sphere, multilateral support for the Chilean economy has been indispensable in the last year for the government to meet its economic targets. In June 1985 the government reached an agreement with the principal creditor banks on a debt renegotiation package that contained new credits for \$1.085 billion and the restructuring of \$6 billion in credits that were to fall due through the end of 1987. The agreement included a loan cofinanced by the World Bank and the commercial banks, establishing an unprecedented World Bank guarantee that loans from commercial banks would be repaid. This element was essential for the approval of the renegotiation package, and its inclusion was supported by the U.S. Treasury Department. In August 1985 the International Monetary Fund approved another package of loans for \$845 million for a 3-year term.⁷

This economic aid has meant privileged treatment for the government in the present international economic context, a treatment supported by the United States Government. The U.S. representatives at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank approved credits for the unprecedented amount of \$774.4 million in 1985.⁸

The Chilean Government has adjusted its management of the economy to the requirements laid down by the multilateral financial agencies, the private banks, and the U.S. Government, particularly by generating surpluses to service the foreign debt. This "disciplining" has been well rewarded, in contrast to the cold reception the parameters established in New York and Washington have received in the rest of Latin America.

Prospects for Change

What are the factors that explain the emphasis on the transition to democracy? Since President Reagan launched his international campaign in 1982 in favor of democracy as the ideological backdrop of his foreign policy, the distinction between totalitarianism and authoritarianism (which guided the policy of openly denouncing Marxist regimes while engaging in quiet diplomacy with the dictatorships of the right) began to lose its force. The present administration's Central American policy has stressed the issue of democracy in order to combat the Sandinist regime in Nicaragua from that standpoint. In this context, the public criticism of the Chilean Government has been presented as a counterweight designed to win domestic political support, primarily in Congress. Beyond the rhetoric, however, the means used with the Chilean regime in no way resemble the trade embargo and the impediments against financing for Nicaragua by multilateral agencies, much less the support for the guerrillas who are waging a military battle against the Sandinists.

The emphasis on democracy has risen as a theme of public opinion in the United States since the toppling of the Duvalier and Marcos regimes. The idea of a "third force" between authoritarianism and totalitarianism emerged as the solution for changing these regimes. It was in this context that President Reagan sent his message to Congress on 14 March, contending that "the American people believe in human rights and oppose tyranny in any form, whether on the left or the right."⁹

Whatever happens in our country will be a determining factor in the direction U.S. policy takes. Whether the military government is inflexible or compliant in paving the way for a transition to a regime that includes the demands of the democratic political parties and the social organizations, on the one hand; and whether the opposition is able to create facts and situations that can alter the intransigence, on the other hand, will both determine the policy of the U.S. Government. The statements made by its representatives have more than rhetorical value; they will determine future policy, in the sense that if the Americans do not see positive results, they will be faced with the dilemma of either seeking other ways of exerting influence, or toning down their blunt statements.

Among those who influence decisionmaking in Washington, the problem is causing increasing concern. "Action must be taken before things reach the point of no return," states conservative academic Mark Falcoff with reference to the Chilean situation. "If things grow worse in Santiago, more ambitious legislative initiatives will be presented, perhaps much more drastic than any measure ever contemplated by the Carter administration." He adds that "if no concrete progress is made toward a political restitution (of democracy) as a minimum, the Chilean Government can expect that the Reagan administration will vote against it in the World Bank, where some very important deadlines are coming up in 1987 and 1988."¹⁰

The fear of the risks of an increasing sociopolitical polarization and its effects on the nature and stability of the future political system in Chile will weigh on the final decisions made in Washington.

FOOTNOTES

1. Statement by James H. Michel, assistant undersecretary of state for inter-American affairs, at the joint session of the Foreign Affairs of the Western Hemisphere and Human Rights Subcommittees of the U.S. House of Representatives on 20 March 1985. OFFICIAL TEXT, Culture and Press Service of the U.S. Embassy in Santiago, 10 April 1985.
2. "Chronology, Chilean-U.S. Relations," July and August 1985, in CONO SUR, Vol. IV, No. 5, November-December 1985.
3. Ibid., note 1.
4. Statement on Chile by Elliot Abrams to the Finance Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives. OFFICIAL TEXT, Culture and Press Service of the U.S. Embassy in Santiago, 13 December 1985. Emphasis mine.
5. Department of Defense, Security Assistance Agency, FOREIGN MILITARY SALES; FOREIGN MILITARY CONSTRUCTION SALES AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FACTS, Data Management Division, Comptroller, DSAA, Washington, D.C. as of September 30, 1985, p. 43.
6. Congressional Presentation, "Security Assistance Program F.Y. 1986," Washington, D.C.
7. FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 June 1985, and JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 19 August 1985.
8. "Administration Fits New Face to Chile Policy," LATIN AMERICA UPDATE, January-February 1986, p. 2.
9. Message from President Reagan to the U.S. Congress on regional conflicts, 14 March 1986, CONSULTATION MATERIAL, Culture and Press Service, U.S. Embassy in Santiago, 18 March 1986.
10. Mark Falcoff, "Chile: The Dilemma for U.S. Policy," FOREIGN AFFAIRS, Spring 1986, pp. 833-848.

8926

CSO: 3348/553

CHILE

EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE DOCUMENT URGES CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

Santiago MENSAJE in Spanish No 348 May 86 p 168

[Text] Justice or Violence

Episcopal Conference of Chile, April 1986

1. We gathered in the Plenary Assembly in the spirit of faith and hope that is born of the Lord's resurrection. At it we discussed the Holy Father's visit to our homeland and addressed other major issues both for the Church and the country.

2. We regard the Holy Father's visit as a gift of grace from God to our Church and to all Chileans.

He is coming to confirm our faith and to renew our hope. Like his, our mission is to announce the Glad Tidings of Jesus, the Risen Lord, and to recall the moral values that derive from the Gospel and that must inspire life.

3. The country is still feeling the scourge of violence: attacks on Carabineros, the slaying of a political leader and a student, a disproportionate repression of demonstrations. These are the most recent incidents in a long chain that is sowing death and destruction throughout the country.

The feeling is that this year will be one of difficult and painful confrontations. Never again do we want the blood of brothers to be shed in Chile. We want peace, which is the fruit of justice.

4. We identify with the anxieties and hopes of all. We can hear the clamor for justice and against violence, a clamor so loud and widespread that "if we were to remain silent, the rocks would speak" and "the Lord would call us bad shepherds."

5. We hope that full justice is done to those who have disappeared, who have been killed, mistreated and even had their throats cut. It is not enough to assert that justice is tardy but eventually comes. Justice that is not

administered when it should be is injustice. It impairs social coexistence. It does not satisfy the aggrieved parties.

The fact that several political crimes have not yet been cleared up has created a climate of mistrust and suspicion that has generated tension and hatred that is harming all Chileans. God wants justice and truth without ambiguities. Without them, reconciliation is unlikely.

6. Along with the problem of justice, the current legal system seems to us to need serious revision. Addressing this problem means broaching the delicate issue of the 1980 Constitution and the political laws. It seems to us that the time has come to study this situation.

The Chilean people must know that in the near future they will be able to organize their civic coexistence in keeping with the desire of the great majority. They would thus be starting down the road to peace and to overcoming the violence that threatens to destroy the country. The more time passes, the greater the damage will be, and the consequences could be very grave for the country.

No one who really seeks to serve his brethren from a position of authority and for the sake of the common good can refuse, above all under these critical circumstances, to listen to this appeal for peace. To a Christian, this is an obligation that weighs on his conscience.

7. We invite each individual to take up his own moral and civic responsibilities. The people are anxiously waiting for a response. The response must be forthcoming from among us all. History teaches us that only with the involvement of the people, who are the ones to be served, can answers that the people will really accept be found.

8. We will continue to pray for Chile. We invite everyone to join in these prayers. Constant prayer will assure tomorrow's brotherhood. Prayer by all will convince us that a country of brothers is being built by accepting the unconditional love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who calls on us to behave just as unconditionally towards others.

9. We entrust this word to Mary, Our Mother, who was and remains a servant and who lives in the heart and bosom of this people. She invites us to put all arrogance aside. She invites us to open the paths to peace and to become, with her and like her, "servants of life."

On behalf of the Episcopal Conference of Chile,

Sergio Contreras N.
Bishop of Temuco
Bishop Secretary General of
the Episcopal Conference of Chile

Bernardino Pinera C.
Archbishop of La Serena
President of the Episcopal
Conference of Chile

8743
CSO: 3348/559

CHILE

COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER DISCUSSES LEFTIST COALITION

Lima UNIDAD in Spanish 24 Apr 86 p 10

[Interview with Luis Guastavino, exiled leader of the Popular Democratic Movement, in Peru: "Imperialism Made FFAA into Military Political Parties"; date not given; first paragraph is UNIDAD introduction]

[Text] Luis Guastavino, exiled Chilean deputy and political leader of the Popular Democratic Movement, visited Peru last week as part of a long itinerary. President Alan Garcia Perez personally received him and had a friendly talk with him. UNIDAD interviewed him and brought up the inevitable topic of the Chilean people's fight for liberation from the yoke of Pinochet. The following is the context of the interview.

[Question] Comrade Guastavino, what could you tell the Peruvian people at this point about political events and the fight for liberation of the Chilean people?

[Answer] Well, I can tell you that we carefully follow the fight that your government has undertaken against the basic enemy of this people, my people, and the peoples of Latin America in general. We are watching Peru, through President Alan Garcia Perez, give real content to anti-imperialism like he just did in Argentina when he warned that he will break relations with the United States if it attacks Nicaragua.

We express complete solidarity with that difficult and complex policy but we also have to tell the Peruvian people that they will soon receive the news they are waiting for with "Solidarity Forward." I mean the overthrow of Pinochet's fascist dictatorship in Chile through the growing, massive, and multifaceted fight of the immense majority of Chilean society.

We know that this news will be happily received by the working class and all the people of fraternal Peru. We also know that the entire world will share in this certain victory when the Chilean people regain their freedom and their democracy.

[Question] How is that popular struggle spreading in Chile?

[Answer] The imperial United States and its vassals in the native oligarchies have caused too much tragedy, pain, and exploitation of our peoples. They are desperate because of the new awareness of the masses, spread through historic feats like the Cuban and Sandinist revolutions. This means that the people themselves have decided to take a leading role in defending their present and their future.

Facing desperation in the last 20 years, the Pentagon and the oligarchies learned that the classic political parties of the right in each one of our countries would no longer serve them. They resolved to transform the Armed Forces into military political parties.

Thus, Latin America was plagued by horrible military dictatorships. In recent years, "a civil war" carried out by the armies against the peoples through terror and repression has materialized under the banner of anti-Communism and the diabolical aegis of the National Security Doctrine. The result is visible: Chile is the best example. In 12 years, it has suffered barbaric genocide through crime, torture, and violation of all human rights. This has just been condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission with the Peruvian Government--for the first time in 12 years--voting for the Chilean people.

[Question] Comrade Guastavino, how does the Coalition of the Left mobilize?

[Answer] I can tell the Peruvian people that I have not come to this country of solidarity to cry about the pain and tragedy of the Chilean people, but to proclaim the struggles and hopes for victory that are spreading throughout the country. The Communist Party of Chile and the important Coalition of the Left, called the Popular Democratic Movement, have fought and fight tenaciously to overcome all the problems that impede the broadest and strongest democratic reorganization in order to confront the main enemy, dictator Pinochet.

Today we verify that there has been an understanding among all the opposing forces, without exception, for a massive social mobilization within this movement. Therefore, it is indispensable to leave behind all sectarianism, expand the political horizon, and eliminate mutual mistrust among the different political and democratic forces. Otherwise, it only helps Pinochet.

Finally, I say to the Peruvian people that when the Chilean dictator falls, a democratic government in my fatherland will be a reinforcement for Peru's fight against imperialism. It will be a factor of rapprochement on such inevitable topics as reduction of military expenses and will further strengthen fraternal coexistence between our nations.

[Question] What have you been doing? What can you tell us as you leave?

[Answer] I am very impressed by and grateful for the demonstrations of affection and solidarity that I have received from the different political and social sectors of the Peruvian people. I am carrying out an exhausting but very encouraging itinerary. I had a meeting with the president of Peru, Dr Alan Garcia Perez, which I felt was very significant and cordial. I also

participated in several conferences and meetings with political organizations, university students, professional institutions, and labor unions like the CGTP [General Confederation of Peruvian Workers], the largest labor union in Peru.

I leave satisfied with the work done. I can say that all the initiatives received have to do with strengthening the solidarity of the countries of the Southern Cone through the Chilean people. This is unquestionably closely related to the Great Argentine Meeting of Solidarity with Chile to be held on 9 and 10 May with delegations from Peru, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Brazil.

7717

CSO: 3348/555

CHILE

MAPU LEADER BARRUETO AIMS TO ACHIEVE UNITY OF LEFTIST FORCES

Santiago ANALISIS in Spanish 29 Apr - 5 May 86 pp 25-26

[Interview with MAPU Secretary General Victor Barrueto by Alicia Oliva; date, time, and place not given]

[Text] In the past week, the United Popular Action Movement (MAPU) made public a resolution from its recent Plenum (the first it has held since the "Congress of Unity" in May 1985). The resolution called for its "full incorporation" into the National Accord (AN).

The secretary general of MAPU, Victor Barrueto, granted an interview to ANALISIS in which he responded to the questions that have arisen in connection with this request. It comes at a time when many consider the AN a "paralyzed" effort, while others simply see no possibility for its survival. The leader expressed his party's view of the current situation, which is characterized by great social unrest and by the effort of the Opposition (at the level of the social organizations) to seek a common road for the country's return to democracy: the "Assembly of Civility."

[Question] Let us begin with the recent National Plenum. What emerged from this meeting with regard to the country's present situation?

[Answer] We believe that the mobilizations, which are the principal alternative chosen by the Opposition as a whole, are showing signs of effectiveness and progress. We have the actions of women, doctors, and particularly students; the country in general is experiencing a period of effervescence; progress is being made on different fronts with partial movements. And along with that, we are making advances, slow but progressive, in the upper political echelons. There are a variety of talks and partial understandings that can be regarded as positive, although not definitive. But the major conclusion is that this great tide of potential energy has not yet managed to get behind a great demand, a great alternative to confront and challenge this regime once and for all. For this reason, the immediate, most urgent task is to seek a consensus and a national unity broad enough to bring all these things together.

[Question] And what is the way to do that?

[Answer] By achieving broad unity on a variety of fronts, without exclusion and without ideology. The time has come to move beyond the political framework that was created in 1983. That framework was determined primarily by long-term partisan ideological interests: the Democratic Alliance, the Popular Democratic Movement, and the Socialist Bloc.

We believe that the time has come to hammer out consensuses and to form alliances that put national interests first. In this regard, we do have experience; we have progressed. The National Accord is an indication of that, because it has brought together a wide variety of forces, and basically offered the country an alternative of governability for the future. That was its role. In another area, we have the Democratic Intransigents, who have become a very influential opinion movement in society by showing the way to democratic unity without exclusion. We also have the Political Youth Coordinating Board; young people have shown that because they have no old wounds, and perhaps because their main experience has been gained under this dictatorship and in the struggle for democracy, they are much more capable than their elders of putting common interests and points of agreement ahead of differences and partisan interests.

At present, I believe that we have come to a milestone, perhaps the most important one from the point of view of moving toward broad, non-exclusive, non-ideological alliances: the Assembly of Civility.

[Question] The Assembly of Civility is one of the principal themes we would like to address. But before that, some points regarding the AN. You have mentioned it among the positive steps toward unity . . .

[Answer] Certainly, because we believe that the AN did play a role. It has already played that role, and one can consider it successful. That is undeniable: It expressed a very broad unity that clearly offered the country an alternative to Pinochet. It stated that here the choice is not "Pinochet or chaos." The international forces (the U.S. Government, European countries, and Latin American countries) perceived it that way, and the Church supported it. Moreover, that was the way the Armed Forces and the whole country perceived it.

[Question] The AN was exclusive, however, and sparked difficulties among the Opposition.

[Answer] Sure, because later on it was used. I want to emphasize, however, that aside from what may happen among the signatories, regardless of their different opinions and the use they have made of it, that document, that consensus, exists. There is an alternative of governability in democracy.

What happened was that the moment Pinochet "slammed the door in its face," the Accord became paralyzed. In my opinion, a major factor in that paralyzation has been the fact that most of the signatories have accepted the veto issued by Allamand's National Unity Movement (MUN) regarding any initiative that anyone has tried to take.

[Question] Even so, MAPU wants to go from supporter to full-fledged member of the AN?

[Answer] At a time of crisis like the one the country is undergoing now, an attempt to revitalize the essential elements of the Accord could contribute positively to the search for a political solution. We believe--and for this reason we have asked to serve on the board--that at this time there is sufficient willingness to reactivate the AN. This basically takes the form of pressuring on several fronts to establish a political scenario in Chile, and to implement immediate measures. The Armed Forces are sensitive to that, and in that regard the AN can play a role.

[Question] And in this whole setting, what impact do you think the Assembly of Civility will have?

[Answer] The assembly is the main thing we have in front of us, from the standpoint of social and political unity. As proposed, it will undoubtedly be the broadest and most participative effort at unity that has taken place in all these years. It will unite the most active sectors with the more moderate sectors that have only begun to join the overall mobilization in recent times. And if this assembly really turns out to be as broad as we hope, it may mark the beginning of a political process that will lead to the most decisive moments in the struggle this year. It could even become--and I say this with some reservations--an alternative center of leadership for the country, with considerable vitality and strength.

[Question] What role do the political parties have in this initiative taken by the social sectors?

[Answer] The political parties have played a rather active role. The public may not have been made sufficiently aware of this, but behind all of these social forces which are playing--and we hope they continue to play--quite an active role, lie all of the political forces. And I think that this must be made very explicit, because it is legitimate and necessary.

In our view, the increasing political and social unity among the people is the key factor that will require, demand and enable broader alliances. The Assembly of Civility is an opportunity, because it encompasses the principal social organizations and the majority of the political parties that are participating in the social and popular movement. I hope we do not waste that opportunity.

[Question] In an interview with ANALISIS in August of last year, you mentioned a lack of harmony between the political leadership and the rank and file. Given all of the above, can it be said that this picture has changed fundamentally?

[Answer] There is no doubt that at that time the situation was much more serious. There has been progress, but there are still major gaps. To a great extent, I share the view expressed by Renan Fuentealba in a recent interview with ANALISIS. He said that he is ashamed of politics. I think he is right. The most active sectors in the country are disappointed when we politicians

fail to attract them, to provide them with alternatives capable of producing major movements and generating enough enthusiasm to rally around them; when they still see the lack of richness and grandeur--as Fuentealba said--in politics. I think it is very important to overcome all that. And I also believe it is necessary to take up a cause that was very strong at one point: the renovation of politics. This means understanding that its basic role is not to make a given person, party or group powerful, but rather to make the people powerful. It means that politicians must understand that it is possible to transform the national situation in a much richer and fuller way through society; that politicians must engage in politics by joining together and being much more aware of people's real problems.

Getting back to the Assembly of Civility, we believe that it is there that the interests of the country and real demands can be put ahead of ideological differences. Proposals should emerge from that gathering that can serve to focus the mobilization and subsequent unification efforts, and of course the content and nature of the national strike. It is imperative, for example, that the assembly issue a demand for decent jobs for all Chileans, as a very central theme that is just as important as the demand for democracy. Because that, without a doubt, is the country's main social problem.

[Question] But political demands should also emerge from that assembly . . .

[Answer] Yes, and we think it is essential that it seek to resolve the conflict of legitimacy that is currently plaguing the country, between the legitimacy of the regime and that of the proposals which emerge from the assembly. We think that these political demands should contain an itinerary for the transition that poses an alternative to the Constitution of 1980, and that the assembly should propose that this conflict be resolved in the only democratic way that exists: by appealing to popular sovereignty, to the verdict of the citizens.

8926
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CHILE

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, COMMUNIST LEADERS EXPLAIN DIFFERENCES

Santiago QUE PASA in Spanish 30 Apr-7 May 86 pp 38-41

[Interview with Jose Ruiz Di Giorgio, vice-president of the Christian Democrats, and Jose Sanfuentes, secretary general of the Popular Democratic Movement, by Cristina Ferrer; date, time, and place not given]

[Text] Yes. No. The matter of the agreements between the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Communist Party (PC) is like a story that never ends . . . and that no one can understand.

"There are no political pacts," asserts the DC.

"Unfortunately, there are not even any secret agreements," claims the PC.

But could there be any in the future? That is what many people are wondering today. When the youths of both political groups are seen sitting at the same bargaining table to call for the departure of Pinochet, among other things, is that a political pact or not? Or when there is talk of an Assembly of Civility "that will gather together the most diverse groups in the country, of whatever political stripe" to demand a change in government, is that a political pact or not?

No, that is a "social pact." One that is supported, backed indiscriminately by the DC or the PC, which is "very different." That is what they say.

Little by little, in the opposition a kind of tacit union is taking shape between the DC and the PC (or rather, the leftist forces joined together in the Popular Democratic Movement, MDP). The top leaders insist that they will not sign any "political pacts." But in practice, they are seen together . . .

How can that be? What is to prevent them from having "political pacts" if they already have "social pacts"? What is the difference between the two?

To understand "the story," QUE PASA invited Jose Ruiz Di Giorgio (vice-president of the Christian Democrats and a leader of the petroleum sector) and Jose Sanfuentes (a communist who is secretary general of the Popular Democratic Movement) to sit down face to face. Both of them explained their views of the expectations both the DC and the MDP have about working together,

whether it be in the social or the political sphere. Specifically, they talked about drawing up a future government program.

Same Old Differences?

Ferrer: Today it is clear that both the DC and the PC are holding talks together, and they appear to have become friendlier with each other now than at any time since 11 September. How did you overcome your differences over the last few years?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Throughout the history of the democratic regime, we were constantly at loggerheads. We were political adversaries. Now, without a doubt, since 11 September there has been a change in Chile's situation. The same thing is happening here that happened during World War II, when the United States, a capitalist country par excellence, joined with the communist Russians to face a common enemy, Hitler. And the same thing is going on here today . . . During the initial years of this government, the DC became aware that Pinochet was trying to perpetuate himself in power, and began to study ways of dealing with the problem. It was not easy to reach an understanding with the people of Popular Unity in the early years, because we had clashed rather severely with them before, and that left deep wounds. But reality is stronger than feelings, and the DC has come to understand that it is necessary to seek points of agreement with all those who are interested in putting an end to the dictatorship.

Sanfuentes: I would say that our historical relationship with the PDC was one of competition. But we were united on fundamental issues, such as the nationalization of copper. Now, under the present circumstances, there is an exceptional situation. We as a people are coming up against a reality that is like a ton of bricks: the reign of terror as a form of government. It is the same as the situation that Europe faced under the threat of Hitler . . . For this reason, the democratic forces of the country naturally must seek a solution to this emergency above all else.

Ferrer: Do the differences that made you political adversaries still exist today? How would you describe those differences today?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Important differences clearly remain. The PC has an overall vision of society that is much different from that of the DC. But at this time, the country's problem is not merely a matter of future ideological programs . . . rather, the problem of today is one of restoring democracy. We must establish a rule of law so that we will be able to discuss our programs before the people. Today it is inappropriate to be concerned about discussing ideological differences with the communists or with the fascists who are supporting this government.

Ferrer: Why don't you specify which differences are important today?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: If we had no differences, there would be no Democratic Alliance or MDP. There are problems, and some differences arise, primarily with respect to the pacing of the strategies that must be pursued to do away with the dictatorial regime. And the DC advocates social mobilization as the

method of action today; it calls attention to the need to involve the vast majority of the population. We believe that there can be no peaceful solution without the broad, massive participation of the people. And we also believe that it is necessary to draft a political program that will permit the regime to be replaced with a real transitional government.

Sanfuentes: It is true that we must begin by considering the ideological and practical differences that separate the Communists and the Christian Democrats. But neither should we create a mystique around the gap between them, which some people try to exaggerate. True, there are profound and important differences: The Christian Democrats' doctrine is inspired by Christianity; the Communists are inspired by Marxism-Leninism. But we must point out that the gap exists in relation to what the Christians call an eschatological element of faith, the belief in the existence of life after death. From the standpoint of humanism, there are major points of practical agreement between Christianity and Marxism. With regard to specific programs, we have always maintained that the perspective of a Christian Democrat who desires democracy can have a lot in common with that of a leftist. Although the programs stem from principles, the principles also have their roots in reality. I am convinced that in planning for the future, we will have more areas of agreement between the DC and the left in practice. I do not mean by this that there will be no differences. But today our policy is to let life itself resolve our differences.

Ferrer: Is the development of "all forms of struggle" the difference that lies between the MDP from the DC today?

Sanfuentes: For us, the social mobilization, the struggle of millions of Chileans, is also the central axis. A group of daredevils, no matter how brave, no matter how many tanks, planes or bazookas they had, would gain nothing from trying to confront the dictatorship alone. All Chileans must confront the dictatorship, finding all necessary and possible methods . . . Thus, we favor the incorporation of the largest possible majority in this battle.

Paces and Paces

Ferrer: It has been said that the DC and the MDP operate at different paces. Is that another major difference?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Sure. When we advocate social mobilization as a key element of our actions, we recognize that it has a pace that has to be geared to the desires of the average sectors. Some middle-class sectors have become inhibited by fear. But the entire process of destruction that the business sector has been suffering, for example, has led them to take more critical stands. Now, the people who are in the MDP or the PC, perhaps because they have individuals from more modest sectors among their ranks, have on more than one occasion tried to speed up the pace. They have a tendency to accelerate, while we have a tendency to moderate the pace. But not to paralyze social action. I believe that this effort can be seen in the Assembly of Civility, which is the fruit of the maturity, both political and social, of the social organizations. And the political organizations are supporting this. This is

taking place without the need for the famous political pacts. Because we agree with the MDP in supporting what the real social world of today is doing, respecting its autonomy.

Sanfuentes: First of all, I agree with Pepe that it is necessary to incorporate the middle-echelon sectors into the social mobilization. I also agree that there are different paces, although I would call them different degrees of urgency. The unemployed worker who has nothing to give his children to eat, the student who is beaten up, those people have an urgent need for this situation to change as soon as possible. The businessman also wants this to happen, but he is not starving to death. Secondly, I think that the coordination of forces must be definite, and that the paces should respond to the great urgency that exists in Chile. Finally, I also think that in the last 12 years, the experience of a government that excludes all civic and political participation has made the rank and file aware of their autonomy and of their ability to make decisions to solve their problems independently of the political parties. Under the democratic system, the parties served as intermediaries between the rank and file and the government. Now, in contrast, the masses do not have the parties to do that, and they have learned a new way to relate to them.

Ferrer: You have talked about the autonomy of the social world. Could you explain where you draw the line between the social and political spheres? The DC says that it can have pacts with the MDP on social matters, but that there is no political pact. What is the difference between the two?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: There is a difference. The labor union world or the social world has its own dynamics. Although most union leaders are political activists, not all those who elect them are equally active politically. Therefore, forging political pacts would ignore the will of the vast majority of one's constituency. Today, however, the workers know that there is no point in fighting for their rights if there is no institutionalized protection for them. For this reason, our first obligation as union leaders is to restore that rule of law.

Sanfuentes: In a given society there are various ways of expressing the will of the people. And the people who join together to assert their rights and redress grievances are the same people as those who express their desires in corporate organizations, regardless of political stripe, because they have common interests. But those same people express their views from a political standpoint, and join together in parties whose role is to point the way to the conquest of political power. Now, under an arbitrary and exceptional regime such as the one we have today, all these social organizations realize that their most basic interests cannot be served under the dictatorship. Therefore, they advocate changing the government in power. Because today the struggle for bread and for jobs is intimately tied to the struggle to replace those who hold power.

Ferrer: In other words, you are claiming that at this time there is no difference between the social and the political?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Today that line of difference does exist . . .

Ferrer: What is it, then?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Today the social world has acquired a different significance than it had under normal circumstances. When there are political parties that are devising strategies to lead the country, the social world tends to use the political leaders as intermediaries with the government. But today the parties are not playing that role because they are totally excluded. And the social world is becoming a political actor itself.

Ferrer: So what is preventing the leaders of the DC from signing a political pact with the MDP?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: The difference is the following: We believe that when we get to the point of signing a document, we have reached substantive agreements. At this time we are holding talks with all the political parties that are interested and are working for social mobilization, . . . including the PC. These contacts are necessary. In other words, we are not in a position to sign a political pact with the MDP, but we can agree on supporting the joint actions that emerge from the assembly of civilian forces. That is what we are working on today . . .

Ferrer: And would the MDP be in a position to sign a political pact with the DC?

Sanfuentes: There has been a lot of talk of pacts and secret meetings between the PC and the DC. Such pacts do not exist, unfortunately. No doubt all the forces of the MDP would like to have not only secret agreements, but open pacts. Just as we are joining together to encourage social mobilization and civil disobedience, we also hope to reach more far-reaching political agreements. Because what do we do when the dictatorship ends? Fight like cats and dogs? No, we must at least seek a framework of governability to lend stability to the future democracy. And I think we can reach an understanding on that.

Ferrer: Does the DC see any possibility of arriving at such a pact?

Ruiz Di Giorgio (reading from a letter sent by the DC to the MDP): "We are studying for the near future a broad program of differentiation between the democracy and the dictatorship . . . That means calling together all political and social forces to take a stand on this fundamental dilemma . . . (. . .) We feel that within this setting, the debate will be more fruitful and decisive." This makes it absolutely clear that under certain conditions, the DC is willing to talk with /all/ [word enclosed in slantlines printed in boldface] the social and political forces in the country. We do not want to exclude anyone. We have to be able to seek a solution without resorting to confrontation, because we regard it as futile though not illegitimate. We believe that there still is a way out: a broad, massive, sustained social mobilization. If this outlet is not available, violence will take over the country, not because the people want it but because the government's attitude is engendering it.

Use of Force

Ferrer: Mr Ruiz Di Giorgio, you say that a confrontation with the Armed Forces would be futile, but not illegitimate. When is the use of force justified?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: We feel that it is not possible to overthrow the government by military means, not because of any problem of illegitimacy, but because it is absolutely impossible. We do not want a civil war for Chileans. But I am talking about the legitimate use of force when a people is oppressed and there is no other way out. But they must have the means to make use of force, or what force are you talking about? . . . Moreover, we must bear in mind that the legitimate use of force implies that it does not cause further damage, and that it will aim at resolving the conflict. Thus, even if it is legitimate, at a given moment, it is not possible because it is not realistic . . .

Ferrer: But at this time the MDP has stated that the use of violence is legitimate . . .

Ruiz Di Giorgio: I am talking about the use of force, of forming an army to confront Pinochet. I am not referring to terrorism or violence.

Ferrer: And what about the MDP's assertion about the use of terrorism, of violent mobilization?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: We clearly delineate the different forms of mobilization. But when there is state violence, . . .

Ferrer: But in that regard, the MDP assertion would also come into play.

Ruiz Di Giorgio: Well, that is precisely one of the problems. The DC does not support or value the use of terrorism or the actions of the Rodriguez brigades. I believe that the Patriotic Front's position is not helping the process toward change; I think they are wrong . . . But we have to understand that there is another problem: To what extent will the violence be controlled, paralyzed, as long as the government is able to repress as it does? There are people who have taken more violent positions as a result of a desperate situation. How can one tell a young man who is out of work and whose father disappeared or was murdered, "No, son, don't be violent, you must be peaceful"? It's not that I'm justifying violence, but these people are acting out of desperation . . . or ultimately, because they have a different view of things and actually believe in that . . .

Ferrer: And what is the MDP's position? To what extent does it promote the "development of all forms of struggle"?

Sanfuentes: We do not want a confrontation with the Armed Forces. Nor are we advocating a widespread armed confrontation between the entire nation and the dictatorship. Nor is it a matter of a guerrilla commando of "He-Mans or Batmans" (sic) coming in and boldly challenging the dictatorship. No. It is a question of the people having the legitimate right to develop the means available to them to defend themselves against this tyranny that has now

become unbearable. We do not favor terrorism, as this government has tried to lead people to believe. Nor do we believe that the Patriotic Front intends to attack innocent people in the nation's streets with impunity. The only real terrorism is that of the state, which is indeed threatening the lives of the innocent and the unarmed . . .

Ferrer: Isn't planting bombs terrorism?

Sanfuentes: I would say that planting a bomb is not attacking innocent people because there have been no fatalities . . . In that regard, I would like to state categorically that we abhor violence. We abhor it profoundly; we abhor the economic violence that has been perpetrated for decades; we abhor the physical violence that is perpetrated against the vast majority. And because we abhor violence, we are even willing to use it.

Future Programs

Ferrer: Since both parties are looking for a formula to restore democracy, can you briefly define the program you have in mind for the country's future?

Ruiz Di Giorgio: A new constitution must make the role of the Armed Forces very clear. They are not a deliberative body that can decide upon or oversee democracy. Secondly, the courts that emerge from this new legal structure will have to prosecute all those who have committed crimes under this government. There can be no amnesty law. If the truth does not come out, there can be no reconciliation. We believe that democracy is the free exercise of sovereignty by the people, first to determine what institutional regime will govern them, and second to elect their officials. The new institutional framework will have to provide for unrestricted respect for human rights. Anti-democratic behavior will have to be considered a crime under the law . . . As for property ownership, there will be a state area, primarily with the strategic enterprises (oil, copper, electricity), a mixed area, and a private area where small and medium-sized businesses can develop, and where the organization of cooperatives is fomented. To do away with unemployment, priority must be given to those businesses which employ the maximum number of people. Not only must we look at efficiency or technical factors here, but we must also look at the priorities shaped by the catastrophe that has befallen this country. Social justice and solidarity must be present in the development of any future economic system for the country.

Sanfuentes: We hope that a provisional democratic system will be created to implement the full observance of human rights in the country, even for those who have failed to respect them during the past 13 years. This implies Truth, Justice, and Punishment for the crimes committed against Chileans during these years. We see this within the framework of the norms to be laid down by the new democratic regime.

The provisional democratic government will have to convene a constituent assembly to draw up a new political constitution. It will have to institute all civic and political freedoms in the country. And finally, it must immediately pursue an emergency plan, first seeking a solution to

unemployment, housing, health, and education, and then incorporating a plan to solve the devastating problems that plague most of the nation's business sector.

We also believe that the justice system must be democratized, and that laws designed to eradicate the despotic doctrine of National Security must be reenacted in Chile. This implies the democratization of the Armed Forces. The soldier must be a citizen, and therefore must have the right to vote.

In the economic sphere, we favor nonpayment of the foreign debt for 10 years. The banks and the key industries of the country should be nationalized. And, naturally, we advocate the promotion of an area of state ownership, a mixed ownership area, and although you may not believe it, the development of private ownership, on the small and medium scales.

8926

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CHILE

CLUSTER BOMB SHIPMENT REPORTEDLY LOADED ONTO IRAQI AIRCRAFT

Santiago HOY in Spanish 28 Apr 86 pp 22-24

[Text] Mr Janabi, the pilot of the Iraq Airways Boeing 747 on flight IA-521, took off from Bagdad one Tuesday in March bound for Rio de Janeiro. It was a commercial passenger flight with a known itinerary. Everything normal. The aircraft underwent a change in the Brazilian city.

As his colleagues Garabet and Saudi had done on other occasions, the pilot took off again, crossed Brazil, traversed the Andes, flew over Santiago and landed on the main runway at Pudahuel Airport. As usual, the plane arrived at night: at 2029 hours on Wednesday the 5th, at 1955 hours on the 12th, at 2354 hours on the 20th and at 2333 hours on the last Wednesday in March.

On its first three trips the Boeing spent no more than 2 hours on the airport runway. Only on its last flight did it stay longer. The fleet of trucks that was transporting the valuable cargo apparently had some trouble. An informant said in confidence: "They were big trucks, and I noticed some license plates: CB-6913-3, FN-2447-6, HV-3109-2. Of course I didn't know what they were carrying. I think they came from the north."

The flight left with no passengers aboard (only once did two persons get on) and with a crew of 12. Its destination was unknown. It might have returned to Rio de Janeiro, unloaded its cargo and become a normal plane again for flight IA-522. Origin: Brazil. Destination: Iraq. Or else it might have crossed the Atlantic bound for other latitudes.

HOY's many calls to the General Office of Aeronautics (eight calls to as many telephones) got only this response from someone who declined to identify himself: "Yes, I know what aircraft you're talking about. It arrived every Wednesday in March and in April too, I think. It's true it came at night, but once by day. Now, I don't know what it came for and I don't know what it was carrying."

The odd thing is that the General Directorate of Transportation, which controls arms exports under the Arms and Explosives Control Law, reportedly did not authorize the export of cluster bombs in March.

Cluster bombs are a quiet, nighttime, multimillion dollar business. The Chilean companies in this field, Cardoen and Ferrimar, are competing fiercely for the top spot in Chile and for predominance on world markets. The same source explained: "A packaged bomb weighs about 300 kilograms, and they sell them for \$12,000 or \$14,000, although here in Chile, because of the competition, there is talk of lower prices. In four flights a Boeing 747 could carry almost 1,000. Figure it out."

Carlos Cardoen Cornejo and Aldo Pesce Frings, who owns Ferrimar, are not the only ones who have figured it out; their closest collaborators have too. Guido Baselli (HOY, No 450), for example, a designer of plastics and dies, started working for Ferrimar in August 1985. The working relationship ended so abruptly that Baselli has just brought suit against the company for nonpayment for his services and for unauthorized use of the improvements that he made in the casing of the "wasp" bomb.

The designer asserts that he introduced many innovations: covering the casing with a polyester resin, incorporating the tail, eliminating the rivets and metal parts. In his improved version the detonating cords are not attached inside of the casing through hatches but are built into the wall of the bomb.

Bombs designed by Baselli were manufactured at the Cartagena plant near San Antonio and later at 757 Coquimbo Street in the capital (this site was closed down by the Santiago city government as an "unauthorized line of business"). In his suit he claims that he managed to build more than 600 and that the final contract was for 9,400. He is demanding more than 70 million pesos from Ferrimar.

Baselli's suit against Ferrimar is valuable in another way. His familiarity with the "wasp" could resolve a longstanding suit that Cardoen has against Ferrimar over the similarity or difference between the cluster bombs that the two companies produce. In this regard, on Thursday the 24th in a majority decision (three to two) the Second Division of the Supreme Court decided that the expert appraisal would be conducted by the Investigations criminal laboratory. The court ruled in favor of Cardoen, who challenged the first expert, the Army Testing Agency, because of the links between it, Army Ordnance and Ferrimar.

The Plastic Tip

The problems facing Carlos Cardoen's company came from elsewhere, however. HOY has learned that a last-minute compromise prevented a former collaborator, first in the United States and later in Chile, from filing suit against him for nonpayment of more than \$800,000 in services.

He could not, however, stop the suit that Enrique Matthei Aubel, the brother of the commander in chief of the Chilean Air Force, filed against him in 14th Criminal Court. Attorney Alberto Sifri explained that "this is a suit claiming fraud for the unauthorized use by the Cardoen company of a product that Carlos Padilla patented and that was later acquired by Enrique Matthei."

The product is an "improved device for hollow-charge projectiles," a very useful plastic tip for the bomblets, the small bombs inside the cluster bomb. Unlike the traditional iron or aluminum tip, which offers greater resistance to the explosive charge carried by the bomblets inside, the plastic tip offers minimal resistance, which makes for a complete explosion without the wear and tear entailed in dissolving the iron or aluminum. Moreover, it is attached by pressure, not screwed on. Cardoen's problem with Matthei began at the offices of Carlos Schurmann, the company's general manager. It was a tense meeting with two lawyers on each side. A source related the details: "Cardoen's lawyers began talking about an anonymous phone call that Maria Angelica Delano de Cardoen allegedly received. The mysterious voice threatened and tried to blackmail her, saying that 'if you don't pay the patent rights, your husband will wind up in jail.' Cardoen's attorneys also accused Matthei of asking for \$4 million to release the patent."

Matthei therefore filed suit, and a few days later, in Fifth Criminal Court, Cardoen filed a countersuit against Matthei, his son Jorge (a former Cardoen employee) and Carlos Padilla "for the crime of fraud."

Alberto Sifri voiced this opinion: "Why is Cardoen filing suit 3 years after the invention was patented and after our suit? His claims are completely untrue. Matthei never asked for \$4 million for the patent; the Cardoen company made that up to divert attention from the facts."

8743
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CHILE

GOVERNMENT UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES SAID TO BE DISTORTED

Santiago MENSAJE in Spanish No 348, May 86 pp 146-148

[Article by Esteban Jadresic]

[Text] In 1985 the overt unemployment rate for the nation rose to 14 percent, or 22 percent if the special employment programs were included (the Minimum Employment Program, PEM, and the Projects Program for Heads of Household, POJH). These figures are still far from what could be considered normal, about 6 percent. But they do represent an improvement over the situation during the nadir of the crisis. In fact, in late 1982 and early 1983, the overt unemployment rate was about 20 percent, and exceeded 30 percent with the inclusion of the special programs for the unemployed.

An important factor in the decline in jobless figures is the larger number of productive jobs generated by the partial recovery of economic activity in the last 2 years. This explains only part of the phenomenon, however. Available background data indicate that at the same time, there has been a substantial increase in underemployment, which has also driven down unemployment figures. In addition, these data show an increase in covert joblessness. Given that any consideration of these factors has been absent from some sectors' evaluations of the development of employment and unemployment in the last 2 years, it is worthwhile to examine them in more detail. Analysis reveals that these evaluations have succumbed to excessive optimism or exaggeration of the improvement.

Rise in Underemployment

The polls indicate that in the past 2 years, about a half million new jobs have been created (excluding the changes in the number of people signed up with the PEM and the POJH, programs which were cut back substantially through administrative measures taken by the authorities). This figure is considerable for an economy with a work force of about 4 million people. It means that in 1985 the number of employed workers (outside the special employment programs) was even higher than the corresponding figure for 1981, before the crisis set in. And this is in spite of the rather depressed level of economic activity (the estimated GDP for 1985 is between 7 and 8 percent lower than in 1981).

These questions come to mind: What kinds of job have been created? How can they be compared with those that were lost during the decline? And in net terms, are there significant differences in the quality of the 1985 jobs, compared to those of 1981? Some background information to provide general answers can be seen in Table 1.

It can be seen that nearly half the jobs created during the recovery correspond to the commerce and services sectors (48 percent). This means that there has been some asymmetry with respect to what happened during the decline, when the two sectors accounted for only 31 percent of the overall drop in employment (if the data from the University of Chile Economics Department are used, the result is very similar). In net terms, during the full cycle there has been a positive balance in commerce and services employment, and a negative one in the remaining sectors.

The most suggestive results, however, appear when we look at what happened to average job productivity. In fact, it is clear that while the sectors other than commerce and services yielded a higher average productivity rate in 1985 than in 1981, average productivity was substantially lower (20.6 percent) in the commerce and service sectors. This indicates that while the partial recovery of employment in the other sectors can be fully explained by the recovery of economic activity on certain levels, in commerce and services the increase in employment has been made possible by a reduction of the productive value added contributed by each employed person.

This point is very significant. By nature, commerce and services are the sectors best able to hide a problem of massive unemployment. Included in these sectors, in addition to business managers and public employees, are vendors who sell candy on the streets, people who guard cars for their owners, and in general, a large number of marginal, low-paying jobs that yield little or no productivity, but are nonetheless classified as occupations in the surveys. The fact that the average productivity in these sectors was much lower in 1985 than in 1981, in contrast to the other sectors where it was the same or higher, strongly suggests that a notable increase in underemployment has taken place. It can be calculated that if average job productivity in commerce and services had been at the same level in 1985 as before the crisis, in relation to the level of production achieved, then the level of associated employment would have been lower by some 300,000 jobs. If this figure were added to the number of jobless workers, the unemployment rates for 1985 would rise by more than 7 percentage points.

In the case of the commerce sector, the rise in underemployment can be seen in the results of the surveys conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), by examining the trends in the number of people working "for themselves" or as "unpaid relatives." According to the figures, between the last quarter of 1982 and the last quarter of 1984, no less than 67,000 jobs were created in these categories in this sector (45,000 self-employed and 22,000 unpaid relatives). It is not unreasonable to suspect the quality of these new "jobs." In the services sector, on the other hand, the lack of adequate information makes it impossible to identify the occupational categories in which employment is growing (because in the polls there is no distinction between those enrolled in the PEM and the POJH, and other workers,

which makes analysis difficult). However, the information analyzed here seems to support the conclusion that, as in commerce, there has been a significant rise in underemployment in this sector as well.

Table 1

Decline and Recovery of Employment and Average Productivity: 1981-85
(figures for the second quarter of each year)

Sector	Change in Employment (number of people)		Average Job Productivity (base 1981 = 100)	
	Decline 1981-83	Recovery 1983-85	1981	1985
Commerce and Services	-134,000	238,000	100	79.4
Others	-305,000	258,000	100	106.1
Total	-439,000	496,000	100	91.9

Note: Employment figures exclude PEM and POJH programs.

Source: 1) Employment figures estimated on the basis of data from the JNE and the Latin American Center for Demography (CEI-ADE). 2) GDP figures for the calculation of average productivity: Corporation of Economic Research for Latin America (CIEPLAN), preliminary estimates (official figures are not yet available).

What factors could explain this phenomenon?

Two, in our opinion, are of particular importance. On the one hand, after prolonged periods of unemployment, many individuals and households affected by this tragedy have probably been forced to resort to marginal activities. On the other hand, significant pressure has been exerted by the administrative measures taken by the authorities to reduce the number of people admitted to the special employment programs since 1983. The partial reduction or total elimination of the income that many families relied upon to alleviate the joblessness problem has also promoted the development of such activities.

It should be noted that a total of nearly 180,000 jobs were cut from the PEM and POJH programs between 1983 and 1985. This happened in spite of an increase in the number of people enrolled in the POJH, which is explained by the drastic cutback in the PEM, amounting to 207,000 jobs during that period (part of this reduction took place in January 1984, when 60,000 people were taken off the program's rolls because of a drastic measure taken at the time by the authorities of the Metropolitan Region in response to the protests in late 1983).

Paradoxically, to the extent that it exerted increasing pressure on households to carry out marginal activities, that PEM cutback was perhaps one of the most effective measures taken by the authorities to boost "employment" (from a statistical point of view).

Increase in Covert Unemployment

There is one other phenomenon that the lower unemployment figures do not reflect, however, and that is the aggravation in recent times of what economists call "covert unemployment."

According to the surveys, only those people interviewed who are out of work but have made "definite efforts" to find a job or who have "actively sought" work are unemployed. The University of Chile surveys refer to the week prior to the interview when obtaining this information, while the INE studies ask about the 2 months before the interview. The problem of covert unemployment is that in practice, a large number of people are definitely interested in working but have not made any specific effort to look for a job; therefore, they are not counted as unemployed, but rather as inactive. The classic case is that of the "discouraged worker," who does not seek work because he has already gotten tired of a fruitless search.

According to the data provided by the University of Chile, the number of people classified in the surveys as inactive but who express a desire to work has grown substantially. Since March 1984, nearly 15 percent of the people outside the labor force expressed a desire to work, while the habitual figures for previous years had ranged between 10 and 11 percent. In absolute terms, between March 1983 and March 1985, 194,000 people were added to this category. Of those individuals, 154,000 belonged to the group that wanted to work more than 20 hours a week.

Although the labor force measured in the surveys has not grown any more slowly in the last 2 years than in previous years, so that the above statement could not be interpreted as a massive shift from the unemployed to the inactive group, this phenomenon is still important. With regard to previous years, proportionally more people of working age now desire to work.

This fact could be attributable to various reasons, for example, the same reasons cited above to explain the problem of increased underemployment. The important point, however, is that the unemployment figures do not reflect this fact. For example, if the 154,000 newly classified inactive workers who want to work more than 20 hours a week were considered unemployed, the drop in the jobless rate between March 1983 and March 1985 would have been 3 to 4 percentage points less. This amount is hardly negligible.

Conclusion

In sum, the consideration of both underemployment and covert unemployment indicates that behind the decline in the jobless rate observed in the last 2 years lies a concealed exacerbation of these two phenomena. Therefore, although the increase in the level of economic activity implied a significant rise in employment, since 1984 the official employment and unemployment figures have presented a distorted view of the real dimensions of this improvement. Thus, the relative optimism some sectors have expressed about the most recent employment and unemployment statistics is unjustified.

The above considerations, along with the fact that the prospects for growth are not very favorable in terms of improving the unemployment situation (in the best of cases, the current situation is expected to stagnate), indicate that much, much work still remains to be done, both to reactivate the economy as a whole and to pursue direct and indirect policies of boosting employment and compensating for unemployment.

8926

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CHILE

COCHILCO PRESIDENT ANALYZES PROSPECTS FOR COPPER INDUSTRY

Santiago ERCILLA in Spanish 23 Apr 86 pp 15-17

[Interview with Patricio Jarpa, executive vice-president of the Chilean Copper Commission; author, date, time, and place not given]

[Text] He began his career in copper mining in 1955, when the Department of Copper was founded. In 1969 he was the first Chilean to be named sales manager of a company in the large-scale copper mining sector, a post he held until 1971. During the next 15 years, he headed a private firm specializing in consulting on the marketing of metals and raw materials. Just over a month ago, Patricio Jarpa Yanez (58, married, two children) returned to the public sector, this time as executive vice-president of the Chilean Copper Commission (COCHILCO).

Patricio Jarpa, who was a member of the Chilean delegation that participated in the formation of the Intergovernmental Council of Copper Exporting Countries (CIPEC) in 1967, is assuming his new position at a rather special time.

COCHILCO celebrated its 10th anniversary on 1 April, and is about to implement a restructuring plan aimed at making it the leading agency in setting national mining policy. In addition, the price of the red metal is still undergoing a depressed period, to such an extent that in recent years and so far this year, its real value has been at the lowest level since 1950. This situation has a direct impact on the balance of trade, to which copper exports contributed 46.6 percent of foreign currency returns in 1985. Patricio Jarpa talked with ERCILLA about these and other issues.

[Question] At present, the price of copper is one of the lowest in 50 years. What can be done to cure this illness?

[Answer] One hears remedies, all of them possibly very well-intentioned, that might have been reasonable 30 years ago. But today they may have no effect, or actually be counterproductive.

[Question] Why?

[Answer] The structure of the market has changed completely. In 1950, 75 percent of the production coming out of the world's copper mines was in the hands of the private sector; in 1948, 60 percent of all production was in the hands of just 5 companies. The private sector was in absolute control. Today, in contrast, more than 60 percent is in the hands of the states.

[Question] And what is the implication of that?

[Answer] When the private sector had everything in its hands, the company had a 100 percent interest in the business, regardless of its nationality. When the state took over, other variables came into play, such as domestic investment, social investment, foreign currency earnings, foreign debt, etc.

Another factor is that the copper sector was characterized by vertical integration in the 1950s. From mine production to terminal market, practically everything was in the same hands, and two things happened: Any adjustment measure reached the market very quickly, because it went through the same hands; in addition, these firms, which were holding both ends of the skein, had a very strong interest in preventing substitution. They made a very serious effort at all levels to promote new uses of copper.

[Question] What is the situation today with regard to the promotion of new uses of copper?

[Answer] We have resumed these efforts. The countries finally realized that this was an area that could no longer be left to chance.

[Question] How has the technological progress experienced by the industry in recent decades affected the use of alternatives to copper?

[Answer] Not only has it meant the introduction of aluminum in fields that used to be within the purview of copper, such as electricity transmission lines and radiators in the transportation sector, but technological advances have introduced the use of fiber optics, plastic, and certain types of galvanized steel. Plus there is the "novelty of the year," miniaturization. We should add that the electrification infrastructure sector has begun to become somewhat saturated, primarily in the more developed countries. Finally, there is the use of ceramics in the automotive industry and in mechanical construction. These factors have changed the structure of the copper market.

[Question] In this context, what are the priority tasks in the copper sector?

[Answer] The efforts to stimulate demand . . . And how is that achieved? Of course, by trying to defend the market for traditional uses, and promoting new applications of copper. In that regard, the following statistic is interesting: In 1985, a single producer of aluminum, the largest one, invested \$117 million in defending a promoting new uses of that product. The eight member states of the Intergovernmental Council of Copper Exporting Countries invested \$850,000.

[Question] Are the CIPEC countries keeping pace?

[Answer] Now they are finally reacting. CODELCO and other local producers and large foreign consumers are making efforts and contributing to the cause jointly, investing some \$8 million to \$10 million in promotion and studies for 1986.

Marketing

[Question] In the meantime, while these investigations are bearing fruit, what is Chile doing in the area of marketing, to bring the price of the metal back up?

[Answer] The price is merely the result of a supply-demand ratio, with relatively more inventories or stocks. Consumption rose at a rate of 0.62 percent between 1976 and 1985, while production grew by 0.66 percent during that decade. There is almost a balance. The increase in consumption between 1956 and 1965, however, was 5.6 percent, while that of production was 4.79 percent.

[Question] What is the status of inventories?

[Answer] All the inventories of producers, manufacturers, exchanges and traders combined have declined considerably since 1983, but not enough yet. Total inventories as of December 1985 amounted to 1.1 million tons.

[Question] What factors have influenced this sharp decline, and why has the price of the metal nevertheless not climbed?

[Answer] The market absorbs all these changes far in advance. Three weeks ago there was a strike at the Central Peruvian Mining Enterprise (CENTROMIN), and nothing happened; then the London Exchange was on the verge of collapse because of the tin crisis, and nothing happened, absolutely nothing. A 10,000-ton drop in inventories came as announced, and nothing happened either.

[Question] Maybe the price of copper is immutable?

[Answer] It appears that the price will react only if a prolonged situation occurs, such as the threatened strike in the United States, for example; their labor contracts expire on 30 June. At this time I see no market-related reasons to expect that the price will rise substantially in the short term, unless the possible strike in the United States hampers supplies for a long time.

[Question] On the supply side, aren't there tools that could favor an increase in the price of copper?

[Answer] Many people believe that an agreement among producers could improve the situation. What is happening to those agreements in other raw materials? Oil went crazy for a while, but now it is total chaos; the same goes for tin; rubber is in a very critical situation now; coffee is operating on the basis of export restrictions, which forced producers to store large amounts of the product, and when they put it on the market, no one knows what will happen to

the price; the cacao agreement is suffering from the absence of the principal producer, Ivory Coast; the sugar agreement is also based on export quotas, and has not managed to stop the freefall of prices. A study conducted by the Union of Swiss Banks in January of this year points out that "in general, it should be noted that international agreements have very little influence on price trends."

[Question] In this regard, what has CIPEC's experience been? Between 1974 and 1976 it employed a tactic of cutting production and exports . . .

[Answer] In 1974 it agreed to cut exports by 10 percent. Since this did not work, the following year it agreed to reduce exports and production by 15 percent. That did not yield results either, and was unable to stop prices from falling, so in 1976 the system was abandoned. Furthermore, in August 1966, we set a price of 70 centavos (in the currency of the time) for Chilean producers to charge. That lasted 3 weeks, because we set the price and prices on the exchanges fell. Consumers began to cut their options, which forced us to conclude rapidly that the price charged by Chilean producers would be the price quoted on the London Exchange. We finally ended up going to the market.

[Question] What would happen today if you returned to a collective effort by CIPEC, as happened 12 years ago?

[Answer] Setting prices is not one of CIPEC's objectives. That would mean establishing a special fund and creating an agency to regulate it, which is not among CIPEC's objectives. Nor is participating as such on the metal exchanges.

[Question] But it has recommended that the member states do participate . . .

[Answer] Indeed. It has recommended that they act with great discretion and at the right times . . .

[Question] . . . and Chile has opted for this formula . . .

[Answer] That is specifically included in our policy, and we are taking action. National producers are proceeding wisely and prudently, and quite effectively.

[Question] But some criticize the national marketing policy, saying it would be better to cut production. What is your response to that?

[Answer] The only ones who would be harmed by that would be we Chileans. At this time the world has an idle production capacity of 900,000 tons of refined copper, due specifically to the decline in the price of the metal. The high-cost firms have gradually shut down, some for good and others temporarily. The latter will start up again if prices become more attractive. Meanwhile, technology has also worked to their benefit, and they continue to study ways to bring down costs. When they return to the market, they will be in a more competitive position.

[Question] Have new protectionist initiatives by the Americans been detected?

[Answer] Whenever this market situation prevails, the sector involved tries to obtain protection. So far many attempts have failed, but this does not mean that we should not expect others. We are quite attentive and active in terms of being able to prevent this kind of development. I think that the American consumers themselves are our greatest allies in this regard.

[Question] During the last few years, the destinations of Chilean copper exports have changed somewhat, especially with respect to the American market. Are we having problems marketing our mineral, or not?

[Answer] For every pound of copper that the developed world needs, five pounds are needed by the developing world. We have to look to that world, which needs a wide range of products and goods in which copper is an ingredient. The market of the future lies in the developing world, and Chile has oriented its sales strategy in that direction. We are increasing our sales on Asian markets, and we are negotiating better freight terms, etc., so that we will be in a good competitive position.

[Question] How can the government's copper policy be summed up?

[Answer] Maintain production levels; study and develop any profitable project that means boosting production, in order to be able to meet future demand; improve productivity; stimulate demand, assuring the consumer of supply, quality, and responsibility in fulfilling contracts; promote and develop new uses of copper; promote greater development of local industry so as to incorporate more manpower not only in the terminal industry, but also in smelting, refining, etc.; promote and stimulate foreign investment in the sector; employ all available means to prevent protectionism; revise marketing systems and constantly update them so that the resources of the market can be used to optimize results; and finally, strengthen ties with the principal consumers and producers in order to arrive at joint actions to defend the copper industry.

[Question] Pursuant to its restructuring, what role will the Chilean Copper Commission play in the context of the aforementioned principles?

[Answer] The bill is designed to strengthen COCHILCO's position as a specialized, technical and professional organization, so that it can advise the government on the formulation of development policies. This bill extends the action that has been taken to date in the field of copper, as well as the mining of metals and nonmetals.

[Question] Will it intervene in marketing at all?

[Answer] The marketing of copper and its byproducts is carried out by the producing companies. They implement their own sales strategies. This strategy and this implementation of bargaining techniques do have to be developed within the overall policy dictated by the government, on the initiative of the commission and within the general contract terms set forth by the Chilean Copper Commission. We must look not only at the present, but

from the perspective of the present we must also develop what is appropriate for the future of the industry.

[Question] What is the current status of the La Escondida project?

[Answer] It has a price tag of about \$1.5 billion, and should generate some 700,000 metric tons of high-quality copper concentrate. I have been meeting in the past few days with executives from foreign investment firms. This year they are in the process of negotiating future production so that the necessary financing can be obtained. If everything goes all right, it is possible that before the end of the year we will have final decisions on beginning specific actions to carry out the investments.

8926

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CHILE

INSTALLATION OF IMPORTANT METHANOL PLANT BEGINS

Santiago ERCILLA in Spanish 23 Apr 86 p 18

[Article by Rosario Alvarez P.]

[Text] Punta Arenas—The sunshine provided an appropriate climate of optimism for the ceremony to lay the cornerstone of the methanol plant in Cabo Negro, 25 kilometers from Punta Arenas, last Wednesday 16 April.

As the executive of Cape Horn Methanol Ltd., David Summer, confessed the night before during the gala dinner, the negotiations to carry out this foreign investment project were difficult, though always cordial. Using an anecdote ("we've already had four parties to celebrate the beginning of the project; we hope this is the last one"), Summer thanked all those who made it possible to install the plant, which will be the most important one in the West.

Methanol, a derivative of natural gas, is used as a high octane additive in gasoline, with the advantage that it does not pollute because it replaces lead. Other uses are as a binding material for wood, and as an ingredient in chemicals for the textile industry, pharmaceutical products, paints and solvents, plastics, herbicides, and synthetic fibers. The Cabo Negro plant will produce about 750,000 tons of methanol a year, and the contract calls for it to operate for 20 years beginning in 1988. Construction should be completed by that time.

There are only two methanol plants larger than this one in the whole world: in the Soviet Union and East Germany. The primary markets for this natural gas derivative are in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

The total investment in the plant is \$300 million, of which 80 percent comes from one of the largest American firms, Allied-Signal. The Hanley Group is also contributing funds; 10 percent comes from the Paper and Cardboard Manufacturing Company; 8 percent from the International Financial Corporation; and the remaining 2 percent from the Methanol Investment Corporation Ltd. (that is, the Menendez community, which represents one of the pioneer families in Punta Arenas and Region XII).

It is estimated that Chile will earn some \$3 million from sales and taxes out of the total earnings of \$6 billion the plant is expected to generate over the

next 22 years. As for labor, during peak periods about 1,000 people will be employed at the plant; on the average, there will be about 500 employees.

During the foundation-laying ceremony, Mining Minister Samuel Lira emphasized that the methanol project is "one more example of the confidence that our country generates." The intendant of Region XII, Gen Luis Danus, added that "the construction of this plant clearly disproves those assertions that Chile is isolated."

Finally, summing up the events that led to this foreign investment project (the most important in recent years), the general manager of Cape Horn Methanol, Eduardo Matte, recalled that "there are people who see things the way they are and ask 'why?'; there are others who imagine things the way they could be and ask 'why not?'. In this second group of visionaries and entrepreneurs are those who participated in the germination and development of this great idea."



Twenty-five kilometers from Punta Arenas the largest methanol plant in the West is beginning to take shape.

8926
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MEXICO

CONTROVERSY ENVELOPS ISSUE OF GOVERNMENT FOOD SUBSIDIES

Key 29 April Statement

Mexico City PROCESO in Spanish No 497 12 May 86 pp 27-28

[Text] While some sectors fear that the government will gradually liquidate the National Company for Basic Commodities [CONASUPO], owing to the economic crisis that the country is experiencing, the agency's director, Jorge Ernesto Costemalle, was of the opinion that the lack of its presence would disorganize markets, increase prices, multiply speculation, exacerbate inequality, and cause the social and political unrest to heighten the nation's economic attrition.

For these reasons, he countered the confusion generated by Commerce Secretary Hector Hernandez Cervantes, who has steadily called for the elimination of subsidies for staple foods, which are one of CONASUPO's main functions.

At a press conference on Thursday, 8 May, Costemalle tried to convince the public that CONASUPO will not disappear nor become privatized. He made it clear that its existence is essential for preventing social eruptions; and hence it needs to be strengthened, in order to give the country and its government greater effectiveness.

The uneasiness regarding CONASUPO's future began on 29 April, when Costemalle submitted his report to the Administrative Council of the agency. In the document that he submitted, he said that the policy to be followed consisted of not continuing to subsidize oils and equipment for milk, egg, and meat production. He explained that the wheat subsidy would be totally eliminated as of the second half of this year, and that the one for corn would be streamlined in order to serve the more needy classes.

But the problem appeared when President Miguel de la Madrid, in turn, declared: "In the extent to which the market mechanisms can efficiently perform their functions, to that extent, the function of CONASUPO will become less necessary."

Fear became widespread among the sectors favoring the government's participation in social marketing, because of the fact that, 2 days later, Commerce Secretary Hector Hernandez Cervantes said that a study was being made of also removing

the subsidy for public transportation in Mexico City, while at the same time coming out in favor of a price decontrol.

These statements prompted the representatives of the opposition parties (even PAN [National Action Party]) on Wednesday, 7 May, in the Chamber of Deputies, to attack that policy damaging the low-income economy. The debate, which lasted over an hour, was marked by the statement made even by Senator Gonzalez Martinez Corbala, that no one wants a weakened CONASUPO, and no one wants to make improper use of subsidies.

Deputy Marcela Gonzalez Salas, of PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party], in turn, explained that the government is "clarifying" the subsidies so that they may effectively discharge their function for the people's benefit, and not give advantages only to hoarders and groups of opportunists. She noted nothing is further removed from the revolutionary plan than the intention of eliminating any of the gains that the people have made by their labor.

But she was not convincing. Hence, the Standing Commission gave approval for the Commerce Commission of the Chamber of Deputies to summon the CONASUPO director to explain the decisions recently made by the federal government on this agency's operation.

A day later, Jose Ernesto Costemalle opted to hold a press conference in order to dispel doubts about the agency that he heads.

But he did not dispel them, and succumbed to contradictions again. What he said did not at all coincide with the content of his work report. And he learned of the population's fear that the government is planning CONASUPO's "requiem," because, while he was talking with reporters, outside the agency's offices members of the National Urban and Popular Movement Coordinating Board (CONAMUP) were persistently shouting, "we don't want goals, we want beans!"

Costemalle admitted that the treasury backing to CONASUPO has been cut by over 50 percent, in real terms, over the past 4 years, and that, in 1986, over 80 percent of the company's budget (which was originally 587 billion pesos) will be directed toward payment of the service on its foreign debt, which amounts to \$1.336 billion.

Nevertheless, he explained that the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit will absorb the commitment to pay this debt, and thus, the parastate enterprise will operate with its own funds which, from its branches alone, will total 1.3 trillion pesos this year.

Losses in Buying Power Described

Mexico City PUNTO in Spanish 12 May 86 p 9

[Text] The report submitted by the general director of CONASUPO to its Administrative Board, read in the presence of the president of the republic,

triggered an avalanche of pressure to bear on behalf of the gradual elimination of that system of public enterprises.

The publication of a few sentences (taken out of context) from the speech delivered by the president of the republic at that meeting, as well as the distortion of the statements made by the head of CONASUPO, heightened the rumors of the possible abolishment of that parastate enterprise.

In his report, the director of CONASUPO, Jose Ernesto Costemalle, announced the stoppage of the wheat subsidy, as well as the decision not to renew the subsidies for oils and equipment for milk, egg, and meat production.

However, some capital newspapers distorted those statements and claimed that the branches of CONASUPO might disappear as a result of the removal of the milk, egg, and wheat subsidies.

Nevertheless, except for wheat and corn, the subsidy for the other staple products had already been stopped over 2 years ago. Furthermore, added to the arguments about the possible disappearance of CONASUPO, was the publication of a sentence from the president of the republic (taken out of the context of his speech) delivered during the meeting: "...In the extent to which the market mechanisms can efficiently perform their functions, to that extent, the function of CONASUPO will become less necessary."

This sentence makes sense with the two paragraphs between which it occurred: "CONASUPO's regulating function in the basic supplies market is of fundamental importance. I think that the considerations that were taken to establish CONASUPO and its predecessor entities are still effective, to a large degree. There are still inadequacies or flaws in the market mechanism that require the government's regulating intervention."

And the following paragraph: "The government of the republic is not an enemy of the market mechanisms, but it is not a fan, either. We know that, in a society such as ours, still underdeveloped in many aspects of its economic structure, the market requires suitable intervention and regulation by the government for the benefit and protection of the society."

The "disinformation" and pressure against the parastate enterprise became so severe that they forced the CONASUPO director to call a press conference last Thursday.

Meanwhile, despite the fact that the Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development had announced that it would continue to control prices of staple products, and despite the stoppage of the subsidy for corn and tortillas, it is not yet known in that department what the impact of that stoppage will be on white bread price increases.

Even though the removal of the wheat subsidy will not occur until this July, in several white bread establishments it is already being priced at 16 pesos (double the official price).

According to research conducted by the Mexican Association for Consumer Protection Studies, Inc, the two foods which recently lost the subsidy (tortillas and white bread) constitute items the higher prices of which have most drastically affected the economy of the workers, in comparison with the other products in the so-called basic food basket.

That association's studies indicate that, during the last 4 years, whereas the minimum wage rose only 3.5 times, the price of tortillas increased 21 times; that of white bread, 15; that of sugar, 10; and those of milk, oil, beans, and rice, from five to six times.

The stoppage of subsidies for staple products, as well as the constant price hikes for them, apart from CONASUPO, has caused major changes in the diet of Mexicans.

A study recently made by the National Consumer Institute [INCO] which, for a year, watched the changes in the diet of 221 families, disclosed that the low income strata have gradually replaced milk with coffee or tea, meat with beans and, to a lesser extent, with eggs, and, finally, rice with pasta.

Despite the official control of prices of basic products and the "direct subsidy for consumers" program carried out through the CONASUPO system, the nutritional deterioration among Mexican families is still worsening. In the case of milk, for example, the National Food Program (PRONAL) estimates that, at present, nearly 40 percent of the population does not consume milk, another 15 percent does so occasionally, and the rest, particularly the families with incomes exceeding three minimum wages, consume it regularly.

The loss of purchasing power is such that, based on data from the Bank of Mexico and research conducted by economists in the Confederation of Mexican Workers, the minimum wage is currently sufficient only to purchase 50 percent of the basic food basket, according to reports submitted by Javier Pineda, labor secretary of that workers' confederation.

The decline in purchasing power has not only entailed changes in the workers' diet, but has also forced the low income families to multiply their work days and even to work outside work centers. The INCO study indicates that most of the families polled with up to twice the minimum wage had to resort to working overtime, preparing products at home, rendering domestic services, and, possibly, engaging in the sale of various products such as clothing and beauty items.

Nevertheless, the ratio between the minimum wage and the prices of basic products does not seem to be an accurate indicator of what is happening to the real consumption of Mexican workers' families. According to the Center for Trade Union and Labor Studies, most of the workers in Mexico are not earning the minimum wage (13.5 million, which is equivalent to 61 percent); 21 percent of the economically active population earns only the minimum wage (4.62 million); and only 18 percent earn a wage exceeding 1,650 pesos per day (3.96 million).

In other words, according to data from the Confederation of Mexican Workers [CTM] and the Labor Congress, 80 percent of the economically active population earns from one to two minimum wages; 10 percent, from three to 10 times the minimum wage; and the other 10 percent holds most of the national wealth.

Similarly, according to data from the Bank of Mexico, on the average, Mexican families consisting of five members must currently allocate nearly 70 percent of their income just to be able to purchase the Recommended Basic Food Basket (CBR); whereas in 1982 they only had to use 46 percent.

During the last administration (from 1983 to the end of 1985), the wage's purchasing power fell to its lowest level in the past 15 years. During this period, the minimum wage increased 3,806 percent; while prices of basic foods, such as bread, milk, eggs, etc., rose 5,000 percent.

And while the talks continue to set the new minimum wage, in an internal study from the Workers Technical Advisory Office of the National Minimum Wage Commission (CNSM) it is claimed that, in order to be able to compensate for the purchasing power that the minimum wage has lost since the beginning of this administration, the new wage would have to be 3,184 pesos per day.

The removal of the subsidies for corn and wheat which, consequently, will affect the rising prices of bread and tortillas, according to an adviser from the National Minimum Wage Commission, is not going to be taken into consideration in the negotiations for setting the minimum wage, "because the Labor Congress agreed to implement a plan for the distribution of bonuses to workers who earn up to twice the minimum wage, so that they may continue to purchase these products at the current price."

Nevertheless, he admitted that, with the elimination of the subsidies, over 12 million families of workers who are not organized will be hurt by that measure.

New White Bread Prices

Mexico City LA JORNADA in Spanish 15 May 86 p 11

[Text] The Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development (SECOFI) has authorized an increase in the price of white bread ("bolillo" and "telera" [rolls]) of 137.5 percent, and since yesterday a 70-gram piece has cost 19 pesos, instead of the 8 pesos that it was worth on 30 December of last year.

The hike is a result of the removal of the subsidy for wheat flour delivered to bakers, which had been estimated at 40 billion pesos this year.

The rise in the price of white bread was not publicly announced by the Secretariat, but there was a report of the decision to industrialists in 11 bakeries, which changed the price of "bolillos" and "teleras" yesterday. SECOFI's general price bureau confirmed to this newspaper the report on the authorization of the popular bread price hike.

Sources from the Secretariat noted that, hence, the new cost will be official, and any change in it will be penalized by the SECOFI authorities. They remarked that its price elsewhere in the country will be dependent on the production costs of the main components, such as flour, fuel, electricity, and other items; because the prices and rates for goods and services in the public sector are different in the national territory, such as the price of wheat flour, which will cost less in the producing regions than in the states to which it must be brought, entailing additional costs for transportation, storage, waste, and others, which will be passed on to the consumer.

Without a subsidy, white bread underwent a periodic change in its price, especially during the grain harvest seasons, when increases in the guaranteed price are usually authorized. The last rise in this price occurred on 20 March, when it rose from 37,000 to 58,000 pesos per ton.

The guarantee prices usually rise during the harvest pre-season, of which there are two per year, one called fall-winter, which begins in October and ends in January of the following year, and the other, spring-summer, starting on 21 March and concluding at the end of the next August.

The removal of subsidies for wheat flour has already occurred in half of the country (in nearly all the northern states, from Aguascaliente upward) and, according to the source consulted, this will most certainly happen in the rest of the republic before the new minimum wages go into effect.

Tortibonds Issued

Mexico City EXCELSIOR in Spanish 28 May 86 pp 5-A, 29-A

[Text] Unforgeable (they have a watermark), invalid if they have erasures or changes, like checks, non-negotiable, and with the warning that they may only be exchanged "for tortillas," the tortibonds have gone on sale.

Each one is worth 64 pesos and is used to purchase 2 kilograms of tortillas, which would otherwise cost 160; because the official price of the product is 80 pesos.

The first issue of tortibonds, in series, and limited to the metropolitan area of the Federal District, consists of 35 million coupons, representing 70 million kilograms of subsidized tortillas. They were printed on fine paper by the Graphic Workshops of the Nation. The first batch of 100,000 was distributed the day before yesterday.

Although it will be the trade unions that will be responsible for selling (or giving them) to their union members, the union leaders themselves have assumed a shameful attitude toward this program, commenting that "it is a political measure of the government in view of the insufficient 25.1 percent increase in minimum wages."

The head of the Labor Congress, Rafael Riva Palacio, sent the groups comprising it a circular letter in which he cautions:

"It should be explained that this program (that of the tortibonds) is unrelated to the dissatisfaction that the labor movement has expressed over the recent decontrol of tortilla prices, as well as the petition that we submitted on the freeze affecting products."

Nevertheless, the Labor Congress itself has already officially requested of the Commerce Secretariat that the program not last only 4 months, as has been planned, but that it cover the entire year.

The program is officially termed "corn-tortilla program in defense of the workers' economy," and every bond carries the following "important" statement on the reverse side: "Through an express agreement by SECOFIN-CONASUPO-DICONSA [CONASUPO Distributing Agency], the following regulations have been established:

"This bond is non-negotiable. The purchaser of this bond may exchange it only for tortillas. The tortilla maker receiving this bond may exchange it only for an equivalent of 'nixtamal' [high-quality corn used to manufacture tortillas] dough, at mills registered with SECOFIN. This bond is not valid if it shows erasures, tears, or changes. This bond is not valid for exchange in any federative state other than the one printed on the front."

Shameful Attitude

Despite the fact that there is a document claiming that it was Angel Olivo Solis, former head of the Labor Congress, who requested of the Commerce Secretariat the establishment of a system of direct subsidies for the workers' consumption, and it will be the same labor agency that will promote the sale of the tortibonds, among labor leaders one notes a shameful attitude toward this type of action.

Yesterday, some of them declared: "The labor movement does not agree with this kind of action, but alternatives must be sought"; arguing that every proletarian family will save 48 pesos on the purchase of every kilogram of tortillas.

According to the agreement between the Labor Congress and the Commerce Secretariat, the tortibonds will be sold through the labor union organizations.

It is stipulated in the document that, "The Labor Congress will promote the program among the union leadership; the unions will request their inclusion in the program from DICONSA; agreements will be concluded between the unions and DICONSA; each union will sell the bonds to the workers benefiting; the sales will be arranged with DICONSA so as to adapt to the following provisions:

"DICONSA will be paid the value of the bonds sold, and a new supply will be requested through the revolving fund; the consuming worker will visit the commissioned union representative or the social action or women's secretariat (as agreed for this purpose) to purchase his weekly supply."

Tortibonds Criticized

Mexico City UNOMASUNO in Spanish 14 May 86 p 2

[Pedro Ocampo Ramirez commentary: "Egalitarian Society, The Tortilla of Discord"]

[Text] It's not that bad; or, at worst, it is. At worst, those awful Mexicans dissatisfied with everything that fate (or folly, perhaps) gives them, who have engaged in publicizing the idea, almost a proposition, that when one of our technocrats decides to use his imagination, one must start running or throwing himself on the ground and begin crying, are not doing so badly in their assessments. Something of the sort could happen in this matter of distributing coupons for the purchase of tortillas at subsidized prices, unless something worse occurs: that this small privilege disguised as social justice may become a weapon for control in the hands of trade union politicians, civic leaders, etc., or an unethical source of income for some of the aforementioned leaders.

At the outset, the creation of the coupons cited (popularly known as "tortibonds") constitutes another step toward exacerbating the contradictions in our so-called egalitarian society, by making social justice a privilege. A privilege for the simple and most regrettable reason that it is a justice that does not reach everyone and, as has become customary, only benefits the right people: those who already have something and hence are given more, as we have noted on several occasions.

As everyone knows, with the subsidy to mill owners and tortilla establishment owners taken away from the food basket (a means of playing a three-sided trick on consumers, without really benefiting the producer), they have opted to give the unionized workers, through the agencies with which they are affiliated, the coupons through the submission of which they will be able to buy their daily supply of tortillas, at prices lower than those set for the ordinary consumer. There will be many middle-class housewives grumbling and ending up paying the new unsubsidized prices of this food which is the people's bread and the basis of most of the snacks with which their imagination fools hunger and pleases the palate. The middle class consumers will do something to face the new price, without having a coupon or credentials attesting to their growing impoverishment, and the unionized workers will do something to survive the crisis, not only with the coupons for the tortillas, but also with the small wage increases that they receive. But what will happen to the jobless workers, and the unemployed and underemployed who are increasingly numerous and eating less?

We must emphasize this issue which by now has become a fixation for us: In our basically unjust society, the one who has a steady job also has (at least this is what the laws and work contracts claim) a remunerative wage, paid vacations, profit-sharing, union stores in which, besides the price discount, he is not charged the VAT, medical care, retirement, disability or life insurance, pharmacies, loans for housing, household goods bought on credit from FONACOT

[Development and Guarantee Fund for Workers Consumption], and now, in addition, even the "tortibonds," which have thereby become a labor conquest. An entire history of labor struggles endorses the improvements that the organized workers have gained in their labor relations, and it would be unjust to haggle over the right that they have to an increasingly better living. But it would be even more unjust to remain silent and refuse a voice to those who, in constantly rising numbers, constitute the backwardness of our society, the evidence of how unjust it is, and the demand that more consideration be given to them.

The unemployed, the underemployed, and the chronic victims who lack all the benefits that we have mentioned, have not succeeded in making contact in our society with the social justice that the revolution intended to offer to everyone, without keeping that pledge. They do have contact, usually having it in the roundups undertaken against street vendors and even in the evictions from their squatter camps or in the operations aimed at breaking up a demonstration or a protest march, with that other justice, capable of ordering the punishment (rules are rules) of the unemployed person who dares to beg for alms on the street.

Since these Mexicans cannot pick up their coupons or "tortibonds" in unions to which they do not belong, nor in work centers where there are no jobs for them, an ingenious solution has been devised: that of giving directly to each one of them (they total several million in all) the aforementioned bonds that will enable them to purchase tortillas at subsidized prices. But, indeed, before proceeding with the turnover of coupons to the unemployed and underemployed, it will be necessary to carry out, for each of them (millions of them, Messrs technocrats) a socioeconomic study to ascertain whether they are really poor or are only going about disguised as if they were.

The other measure is also praiseworthy: to distribute among civic leaders or heads of other popular organizations sufficient books of coupons to distribute (one tortilla, one vote?) among the grassroots; "tortibonds" which, of course, will have to be distributed (as planned in the offices set up in some cloud, where this idea came into being) based on the most unobjectionable scrupulousness.

Assurances From CONASUPO Head

Mexico City EXCELSIOR in Spanish 30 May 86 pp 4-A, 31-A

[Text] Yesterday, the general director of the National Company for Basic Commodities (CONASUPO), Jose Ernesto Costemalle, claimed that the Federal Government has been "very consistent" in its conciliatory function with respect to antisocial positions.

Interviewed briefly at the conclusion of the third work report submitted by the director of the National Family Integration System, Leobardo C. Ruiz, in the Carranza Room at Los Pinos [official presidential residence], Costemalle remarked:

"The subsidies that CONASUPO is giving are fully justified, and will continue to be granted in a selective, organized manner so that this area will become increasingly less burdensome on public finances."

He stressed that these subsidies are "indispensable," particularly in cases such as that of tortillas, bread, and what is conveyed through social programs to low-income sections of the city.

Costemalle emphasized that it has been clearly established that, if in normal times the sufficient presence of programs to regulate markets is required to prevent antisocial practices, it is needed "with all the more reason during this critical period to protect purchasing power."

He was asked about the recent attacks on CONASUPO, from the standpoint of inquiring whether they meant that there was a split among various sectors of the society, and he commented:

"There is definitely no reason for a split. You know that, all of a sudden, there have been incidents and positions that could be depicted as attitudes. The Federal Government has been very consistent in stressing that its function is a conciliatory one among all sectors of the society, precisely in order to forge ahead."

He noted that, in real terms, CONASUPO's budget has declined during the 6-year period between 45 and 50 percent, but he claimed that, this year, the budget will be 1.4 million pesos, "sufficient" to meet the obligations of this para-state enterprise.

Costemalle also precluded the possibility that CONASUPO may request additional funds to maintain the subsidies, claiming that the budget originally approved would be kept.

2909
CSO: 3248/477

MEXICO

BISHOPS APPEAL FOR CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR IN POLITICAL LIFE

Mexico City DOCUMENTACION E INFORMACION CATOLICA in Spanish 10-17 Apr 86
pp 209-214

[Document entitled "Christian Consistency in Politics, Pastoral Exhortation of the Bishops of the Northern Pastoral Region," issued 19 March 1986. For related items, see JPRS LATIN AMERICA REPORT of 15 May 86 (JPRS-LAM-86-042), pp 75-76; of 6 Feb 86 (JPRS-LAM-86-015), p 111; of 18 Sep 85 (JPRS-LAM-85-078), pp 67-87; of 9 Sep 85 (JPRS-LAM-85-076), pp 107-108]

[Text] Editor's Note: On 19 March 1986, the bishops of the dioceses comprising the Northern Pastoral Region published a document regarding some matters associated with political activity. They assert the Church's right "to illuminate the area of political reality with the light of faith," and set forth some principles taken from the Church Magisterium, especially Vatican Council II and the Puebla '79 document. The layout of the document is as follows:

Introduction

- I. Discerning Membership in a Party
- II. Sound Political Pluralism
- III. Christian Attitude Toward Corruption
- IV. Correct Understanding of the Church
- V. Heed for the Church's Social Doctrine
- VI. The Laity: Witness to Christ in the World
- VII. Absolute Fidelity to Christ Alone

Conclusion

The document, which was extensively discussed and submitted to the press on Saturday, 22 March, is signed by the archbishop of Chihuahua, Adalberto Almeida y Merino; the bishop of Ciudad Juarez, Manuel Talamas Camandari; the bishop of Torreon, Fernando Romo Gutierrez, and his coadjutor, Luis Morales Reyes; the prelate of Nuevo Casas Grandes, Hilario Chavez Joya, M.N.M; and the vicar apostolic of Tarahumara, Jose Alberto Llaguno Farias, S.J.

The Federal District press has been commenting on the document, but has only published a few excerpts, which have received some comments and even editorials. The complete text which DIC hastens to publish is as follows:

Pastoral Exhortation

To our dear brothers in faith, the Catholics of our dioceses who are militants in political parties:

1. We the undersigned bishops address you prompted by our obligation as pastors to announce the Gospel of Christ to you and support you with a living faith, so that you may be true witnesses to Christ in an activity as praiseworthy and at the same time as filled with risks to Christian conscience as politics.
2. This exhortation applies generally to all the Catholics who militate in any political party, and we hope that this is how they will interpret it; because it is no exaggeration to claim that the course which democracy and social justice take in the near future depends largely on the positions assumed by its leaders and other members.
3. We hope that you, as Catholics, do not share the error of certain persons who deny the Church the right to illuminate the area of political reality with the light of faith, as if this reality did not also have to be governed by the commandments of God. Certain ideological movements tend to confine the living experience of faith to the private realm of individual and family life. They deny faith its social dimension, and exclude it from all professional, economic, social, and political activity.
4. The Church has always claimed for itself the right and duty of discerning, with the light of the Gospel, the situations which occur in the area of politics. The Church's presence in this area stems from the innermost part of Christian faith: the dominion of Christ, which extends to all human life on earth (Puebla '79, 511-516).
5. Vatican Council II teaches that, "It is just that the Church should be able, at all times and in all places, to preach the faith with real freedom, to teach its social doctrine, to carry out its mission among humans without any obstacle, and to give its moral judgment, even on matters relating to the political realm, when it is required by the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls, using all and only those means that are consistent with the Gospel and the good of everyone" (Gaudium et Spes, 76).
6. In reflecting with you on some principles of political morality, we do so with absolute respect for "the fitting autonomy of what is temporal, and what is of value to governments, parties, trade unions, and other groups in the social and political area" (Puebla '79, 519), provided this autonomy is correctly understood (Gaudium et Spes, 36).
7. As pastors, we respect the option that you Catholic laity have taken for your party. We acknowledge, based on the Church's present guidelines, that it is upon the laity that partisan politics is incumbent (Puebla '79, 524); and we reaffirm our decision to remain dissociated from it. As bishops, we are unable and unwilling to participate in any political party; something that also holds true for our priests, deacons, and religious.

8. We waive, with pleasure, any right that we might have in that area, so as to be able to preach the Gospel more freely to all political parties, as Christ preached it, without partisanship. We are aware that our parishioners, making use of their right, have opted for different political parties, and we have no desire to be biased in favor of any one, because that would jeopardize the unity of God's people (Puebla '79, 523-529).

9. As pastors, we must render an accounting to God of having preached the Gospel to you in its entirety, and we realize that not only the good of our nation, but also your eternal salvation, could depend on the concrete response that you give to Christ in your political activities.

I. Discerning Membership in a Party

10. We remind you once again that the Christian recognizes only the Kingdom of God as the sole ideal situation in which there will be complete peace, justice, and prosperity for all. This Kingdom is a gift of God which has already begun on earth with Jesus Christ, and which will not have perfect fulfillment until Christ comes at the end of time. Meanwhile, this Kingdom is growing in history, and expanding through the action of all humans who have consciously accepted Christ and are following him, and even those who, without expressly knowing or recognizing him, have accepted the values of this Kingdom and are attempting to put them into practice.

11. In the light of this ideal, the Christian must judge his membership in a political party, which is a partial, temporal, and temporary structure, in which there are good things and bad. The Christian who decides on a party or an ideology must always give them a discerning membership, wherein he accepts all that is good and rejects all that is bad in them, and must always be willing to exchange them for something better when he finds it.

12. Leaders, ideologues, and other members of his party must be aware that this is the type of membership that can be expected of a Catholic; because, to us, making a political party absolute, whatever it may be, and lending its principles and policies for action an exclusive, definitive nature, means succumbing to a kind of idolatry.

II. Sound Political Pluralism

13. Vatican Council II urges Christians to struggle with moral integrity and wisdom, not only against injustice and oppression, but also against the intolerance and absolutism of a single person, or of a single political party (Gaudium et Spes, 75). This does not mean that we must necessarily succumb to the two-party system.

14. In fact, a fixed, predetermined two-party system, which precludes other options for the citizens, would not represent progress over the single party system either. It is the people themselves, with their vote, who must decide how many and which parties they deem worthy to manage the common welfare, simultaneously or alternately.

15. Modern life is so complex, and the social problems are so great, that both governors and those of us who are governed must be aware of our own inadequacy for achieving solutions in isolation. All energies must be pooled for a better pursuit of the common welfare.

16. Vatican Council II also teaches us that, "It is completely in keeping with human nature that legal-political structures should be established to offer all citizens, without any discrimination and with increasing improvement, actual opportunities for participating, freely and actively, in laying the legal foundations of the political community, in governing public affairs, and in determining the areas of action and limits of the various institutions, as well as in electing rulers" (Gaudium et Spes, 75).

17. It is only natural that, with so many different people in a political community, they may, with every right, be inclined toward different solutions. With regard to Catholics, the Church teaches that, since all political parties and ideologies are something relative and temporary by nature, the very urgent need to comply with the will of God could lead Christians to different options and to be militants in different parties, without requiring on that account that they be satanized and exposed to the public as traitors.

18. Insofar as the Church is concerned, we repeat that no political party can claim for itself the representation of all the faithful; because one concrete program can have no value.

III. Christian Attitude Toward Corruption

19. It is no secret to anyone that, in Mexico, the institutions with public authority have been stricken with a deepseated, widespread, and by now very prolonged corruption. There is almost not a day on which the media or other sources of information do not alarm us with a new case of corruption: public funds are squandered for the benefit of officials; fictitious jobs are created within the bureaucracy; funds to be used for public services are wasted through inefficiency; the granting of favors, and even legitimate services, is made to depend on favoritism or bribery, etc.

20. It is obvious that corruption, as a human act, is not confined solely to public institutions, but also occurs in the private ones; it is not confined to one party, but may occur in all of them; but we are commenting here on the exaggerated dimensions that corruption has assumed in Mexico, in the government institutions, where it has virtually been institutionalized under the authorities' protection.

21. We know that a considerable number of Catholics, who are sincere believers and practicing, think that, by their personal testimony within a party, and by the honest exercise of a public office, they are going to rid the institutions of the corruption that they contain. We respect their decision, but, at the same time, we urge them not to succumb to naivete, whereby they would end up participating in the very thing that they had previously condemned.

The corruption is obviously not due to the ideological principles of any party nor to the programs thereof. It would be monstrous for any party to have such an intention, and to consciously prompt its members to engage in it. The corruption that has for some time taken possession of the institutions is due primarily to the reluctance that exists for becoming open to a sincere, authentic democracy.

23. The lack of democracy in a party reveals a definite desire to exercise power in an absolute, uninterrupted manner. And absolute power, in human hands, which are necessarily limited, leads inexorably to corruption. Any system, regardless of how good it may be, when it becomes totalitarian, invalidates itself for promoting the common welfare.

24. When an official or a party does not owe its position to the voters, and when the retention thereof does not depend on a change of desire among the latter, they have no reason to account to anyone for their actions, nor do they experience the healthy concern, inherent in a genuine democracy, over responding to the citizens' expectations, looking forward to the results of future elections. Then the party becomes dissociated from the people; it acts in itself and for itself, and all its actions are aimed at retaining power by any means, and not at serving the people.

25. Now, underlying the corruption which is besetting the country is a greater corruption, namely, electoral fraud. This is shown not only in the forging of votes, but also in all those reprehensible measures leading to the padding of voting results in favor of one party, disregarding the citizens' free choice; for example:

Pressure on government workers to vote for a certain party, using threats or promises;

Pressure on citizens, offering them services which, by their nature, should be rendered as normal acts of government;

Putting all, or nearly all the news media in the service of a single party, while at the same time suppressing information relating to the other parties or candidates;

Diverting public administration funds to meet political campaign expenses;

Linking to a certain party the intermediate organizations which, by nature, should be independent; for example, the trade unions, using them for partisan or electoral purposes.

26. These bad habits, and many others, which we have all witnessed, should not be tolerated by any Christian conscience, because they constitute a serious sin against several commandments of the law of God.

27. You Catholics should be the first to repudiate those corrupt practices, and also to exceed the criticism that might be voiced by the other parties or

among citizens. You should be the critical conscience of your party, even though this position may entail serious consequences for you. Remember the words of Jesus: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he loses his soul?" (Mk. 8:36). "You are the salt of the earth, the Lord also said; and if salt loses its flavor...it is good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot" (Mt.5:13).

28. We know that many people, including Catholics, justify the need for the continuation of a single party in power at any price, out of fear (in their eyes very legitimate) that, without it, Mexico would be incapable of governing itself, or would fall into the hands of other parties that might jeopardize the country's independence and security. There is no reason to be surprised by this type of justification, which has always been reiterated by totalitarian regimes, and which, in essence, conceals the fear that the people are not yet mature enough to discern the course of action that best befits them, while at the same time attempting to keep them in a political immaturity that would warrant such fears. In any event, in politics too, we must remember that "the end does not justify the means."

IV. Correct Understanding of the Church

29. It is normal for you, as Catholics, to be striving for the ideals of your party, along with other comrades who do not share your faith. Many of them are even avowed agnostics or atheists, and even belong to associations that have traditionally shown overt hostility to the Church or profess ideologies contrary to it.

30. In this regard, we must remember that we Catholics, while at the same time demanding complete freedom to profess and express our religious convictions, must also respect the convictions of others, based on the pluralism that typifies modern society, stringently abiding by the limits that demarcate the rights of others.

31. Nevertheless, this sound pluralism and this coexistence should not lead you to indifference, much less to reneging , either tacitly or expressly, on the beliefs that you profess in the family or private environment. "For whoever is ashamed of me and my words (says Jesus) the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory" (Lk. 9:26). This situation should rather, encourage you to reaffirm your own identity as Christians, and to "Be always ready with your defense when you are called to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

32. It is well known that many politicians, for lack of faith and because of historical prejudice, view the Church as merely a human institution, antagonistic toward the state, which is constantly striving to take away its political power or to gain privileges.

33. Whatever confusion there may have been in the past on one side or the other, confusing the authority of both entities, the Holy Spirit, who is constantly

working in his Church to lead it toward an increasingly full understanding of the teachings of Christ (Jn. 16:13), has been making us understand more clearly the nature and mission of the Church.

34. Now, do not let yourselves be led to an area of discussion that does not correspond to reality. You as, believers, should view your Church as the mystery of faith which it is. Though having a visible, structural feature established by us fallible humans who comprise it, the Church is not a merely human work, but has as its founder Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who established it based on the preaching of his Gospel, as well as his redeeming death and his glorious resurrection. He indicated for it as a task the same one that he came to perform at the behest of his Father: to announce the Kingdom of God and to establish it among all peoples, being itself the beginning of that Kingdom (Lumen Gentium, 5). Christ himself makes us experience his constant presence in the Church through his Spirit (Mt. 28:20; 1 Jn. 3:24).

35. Then, let us not attempt to classify the Church in the same molds that we use to define political communities. For example, terms such as "monarchy" or "democracy" do not pertain to it. The Church is, above all, a "communion," that is, a people comprised of humans of all races and nations, who have as a supreme principle and model the unity of a single God, in the Trinity of persons (Lumen Gentium, 4).

V. Heed for the Church's Social Doctrine

36. Among the topics relating to the Church which are often distorted, is that concerning Church-State relations. Certain partisan sectors insist upon accusing the Church of opposing the separation of both entities, established during the last century.

37. We can assert that this separation benefits the Church no less than the State, and the Church fully accepts it; because the two institutions "are independent and autonomous, each in its own area. Both, although with different entitlement, are in the service of human personal and social desires. They will perform this service with all the more efficiency for the good of everyone the better the two cultivate a sound cooperation with each other" (Gaudium et Spes, 76).

38. Nevertheless, we think that this process of separating Church and State in Mexico is not yet completed. It suffers from serious faults, since the State constitutionally ignores the Church's legal status, and has established an improper State interference in the Church's internal affairs.

39. This matter, and many others relating to the economic, political, and social areas, have received suitable treatment in the Church's social doctrine. This doctrine, based on Sacred Scripture and on the theological reflection of 20 centuries, has been structured and systematized since the last century in particular, and now enjoys great prestige in the international area.

40. It is obvious that you, as political Catholics, should study it thoroughly, in order to receive guidance from it in your political activity. The Church's social doctrine is not the property of any party, nor does it coincide with any system. But it is a service of reflection that the Church offers to all parties and systems, to reinforce, guide, and correct their ideologies, as the case may be. The least that can be expected of a Catholic is that, through his thinking and actions, this doctrine would influence all areas of human activity.

VI. The Laity: Witness to Christ in the World

4. "The divorce between the faith and daily life of many [Christians] should be considered one of the most serious mistakes of our time" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 43). We might claim that this comment from the Council accurately indicates one of the main flaws that we must overcome in Mexican Catholicism.

42. Catholics are mistaken who, influenced by an ideology alien to our faith, think that they can devote themselves totally to temporal affairs, for example, business and politics, as if the latter had no connection with the authenticity of their Christian life, or as if the latter were confined only to certain acts of worship or the fulfillment of certain moral obligations in the individual realm (*Gaudium et Spes*, 43). It is extremely important for Catholics who militate in a political party to assume their identity as lay members of the People of God, which is the Church. Hence, fulfilling an enjoyable pastoral obligation, we want to help them to remember the marvelous richness of that reality.

43. Their status as lay member of the Church stems from the fact that they have been incorporated into Christ by baptism and by the other sacraments of Christian initiation, whereby they are integrated into the People of God and participate, in their way, in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Christ, to perform the task which He assigned to his Church.

44. Unlike priests, it is incumbent on the laity, based on their own calling, to try to establish the Kingdom of God, by managing temporal affairs and putting them in order according to God. Laymen are called by God, in doing their own work or practicing their profession, guided by the evangelical spirit, to contribute to the construction of the world from within, by way of ferment. Laymen are those who make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances wherein it could only become the salt of the earth through them.

45. To carry out this marvelous task, laymen are not alone nor devoid of resources, because they have been incorporated into Christ who, through grace, lives and acts in them, strengthening them and illuminating them with his Spirit. Thus, laymen have the task of cleansing the structures and environment of the world, when they are dominated by sin (*Lumen Gentium*, 4).

46. For this, brothers, is your highest honor and your greatest responsibility. We might quite rightfully wonder whether the political activity in Mexico, the exercise of which has, in the eyes of many, become synonymous with corruption, would be the same if the laymen who hold public offices, many of whom come from very Christian families and were trained in Catholic schools and apostolic groups, were consistent with their Christian calling.

VII. Absolute Fidelity to Christ Alone

47. We urge our dear Catholic brothers committed to politics, among whom there are relatives and very close friends of ours, under all circumstances, to remain very united to Jesus Christ, and to constantly cultivate a greater understanding of, and friendship with Him.

48. Only Christ can claim absolute fidelity of us. He is, as our faith confesses, true God and true man. He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). He is the stone which many builders reject, but which has become a cornerstone for building a more humane and happier world. "There is no salvation in anyone else at all, for there is no other name under heaven granted to men by which we may receive salvation" (Acts 4:11-13).

49. "The Lord is the end of human history, a point of convergence toward which all the desires of history and civilization are aimed, the center of humanity, joy of the human heart, and total fulfillment of its aspirations" He is the one who gave up his life in sacrifice for our sins, and "whom the Father revived, exalted, and placed at his right hand, making him judge of the living and dead" (Gaudium et Spes, 45).

50. Therefore, "Jesus, in a unique, original, and incomparable manner, requires a radical following, which includes every man, all men, and involves the whole world and the entire cosmos. This radical nature makes the conversion (to Him) a never finished process, both on the personal and social level. Because while the Kingdom of God includes historical achievements (such as parties, systems, or structures), it is not exhausted nor identified with them" (Puebla '79, 193).

51. As pastors, we are aware that it is not easy to live these realities of faith, embodying them in the area of politics which, in turn, has so many implications in the economic, social, and cultural areas, and in all human activities. Hence, we are urging you to live your calling as laymen, and your political militancy in the context of a profound spirituality.

52. Devoting oneself to constant prayer is not in contradiction to the political position; quite the contrary, it urgently requires this. Foster a close communion with the Lord, through the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance), which purifies our conscience through Christ's expiatory sacrifice, and keeps us in a constant attitude of conversion.

53. Also participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, receiving the body and blood of the Lord, which gives us life and strengthens us to be his

witnesses. No Catholic, even if he be a high-ranking official, is excused from this celebration, unless it is because of a physical impossibility. Moreover, the loftier his responsibilities, the more he needs to visit the source of grace. Nevertheless, try to rid that fulfillment of your duty as members of the Christian community of any vestige of propaganda that might discredit your good intentions and manipulate the people's religious sentiments. Finally, keep as a bedside book and traveling companion the Sacred Scriptures, especially the New Testament, the reading of which will fill you with wisdom for the correct discharge of your critical mission.

Conclusion

54. We address this exhortation to you in your capacity as Catholics. We have no intention of influencing your strictly political and partisan activities. We only ask you that, whatever they may be, you engage in them abiding strictly by Christian morality and the dictates of your conscience. Nor should our intervention be viewed as backing or impugning any party, because we declare ourselves dissociated from, and at the same time respectful of all of them.

55. Nevertheless, we hope that every party will observe itself free from temptation toward totalitarianism, not alien to the exercise of power, and determined to participate in free democratic activity with the other parties, trusting in the Mexican people's political maturity. This is the only way in which the parties can contribute to the country the values which are their own, and help to make the nation great.

19 March 1986, Feast of St Joseph

Adalberto Almeida y Merino
Archbishop of Chihuahua

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Bishop of Ciudad Juarez

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Bishop of Nuevo Casas Grandes

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2909
CSO: 3248/478

MEXICO

SEVERAL GRASSROOTS CHURCH COMMUNITIES DESCRIBED BY MEMBERS

Mexico City CHRISTUS in Spanish Mar 86 pp 20-28

[Text] History of Our Community, 1970-1985

We present a collective account of several suburban CEB's [Grassroots Church Communities]. This is an article prepared as follows: In each community, they taped their account. They were given the topics and were allowed to narrate as they wished. The person who edited took the seven tapes on which they had responded and combined them into one article, adhering to them as much as possible. The chronological order may not be very accurate at some junctures. There are repetitions, words that are not very technical, etc.; but it is their story.

The history of our community is not long, but it is very rich. Fifteen years ago, people were just beginning to arrive in this "colonia" [urban community], one of those forming the "outskirts" of the country's large cities.

Some of us had already lived over in other colonias, renting a small room, or in outhouses or very ugly neighborhoods, or moving in with relatives. But most of us came directly from our towns and farms. We were all looking for work, because it was claimed there that everything was different here: that there was a way of earning a living, having doctors and schools, and earning money...in short, that it would be easier for us to survive.

Some of us thought that our coming was only temporary, but we have not yet returned to our land. Our children are now from here.

We began hearing that in this colonia they were selling cheap land with utilities, and that they were giving 6 years to pay for it. Since we no longer wanted to rent or keep moving around, we decided to buy our plots, some sooner and others later. We were poor, we are poor, and we couldn't buy in a better colonia. We bought in a poor colonia, and here we are.

The first of us to arrive found a desolate, rocky land, full of brambles. We bought our small plots with much sacrifice. Some of us were at the point of losing them, because we had no money to pay the monthly installments, and they were threatening that if we were 2 months overdue they would cancel our plots.

At first, most of us lived in huts made of sheets of cardboard; there were but few families who had a small portion of material, because all of us were the poorest people existing, and the only thing we wanted was a little plot of our own, even if it were under a shed roof. Gradually, we became settled: some in a small adobe room without a roof, only half covered with some twigs.

When it rained, we had to crowd together in a little corner so as not to get wet, and we had to use oilcloth because everything was soaked. Others were able to put up their little roof, but they had no doors, no floor, or anything. When the Lenten weather arrived, with the strong winds, the wind would blow off our cardboard roofs and everything was filled with dirt. Of course, most of us had no furniture, not even a small table for eating. There were no utensils for cooking either. Many people's stoves were the fires that we made on the ground with sticks. What a kitchen, with nothing!

We lived in this situation for months, and even years, until, with the help of God, we were able to become somewhat settled. Many of us have not yet finished our houses. We fix them up and repair them as needed, and as we can.

During that first period, there were but few plots that had their water tap. The owners shared it with the others, but when we were not near a tap, we had to travel very far to haul the water needed for drinking, preparing meals, and making the bricks for our houses. Sometimes, especially during May, there was a great water shortage. We spent entire days without a drop, or with only a little shower at midnight or dawn. When we all had our own tap, we realized that the installed water systems were insufficient for the colonia. There was no light either. Some of the streets were paved with stones, and others were not. There were no sidewalks. We lacked telephones and garbage collection service.

Indeed, we lacked most of the services required in a place that is beginning to be inhabited with extraordinary speed. The sellers offered us the colonia under some conditions, and they turned it over to us under different ones.

By then, a small chapel had already been erected where Mass was celebrated. Then the first stone was placed, and construction began on the church that we have now.

The urban buses did not enter this far. The terminal was very far away, and we had to do much walking. That was hard and, at night, with the colonia in darkness, it was becoming dangerous.

There were no schools. The children studied on vacant lots or in fenced plots given to us by the owners. They sat on bricks or stones. People who had a little more knowledge were the ones who gave the courses, because if we had no schools, we were far less likely to have teachers.

Despite everything, we were happy amid our poverty. We felt free, and we had hope of progressing and our children's having something better than what our lot had been.

We were growing, based on much sacrifice. Some, who were more restless, wanted to do something about so many needs. We began meeting, and looking at the problems. We learned how to organize and so, organized and more and more aware, we went to the authorities, protesting and holding demonstrations. Through a struggle lasting years, we achieved water, light, transportation, telephones, garbage collection, schools and teachers. These accomplishments are due mainly to God, but they were a result of our communities' unity and cooperation, along with all the people, and with the encouragement, support, and guidance of our advisers. Despite the difficulties, we did not become discouraged, and managed to forge ahead until we achieved what we had proposed in each instance.

Our community groups were founded at different times and in different ways. We retain the memory of those beginnings:

"Our community was founded one Monday afternoon, when a little girl came and told me: 'Mother wants to talk to you.' And she told many other women the same thing that she had told me. The Mother invited us to gather in a vacant lot. It was very nice, because the Mother had a record-player on a chair, and she was playing a record, as if we were children. We formed a circle around that chair and that music. When the record ended, the Mother began talking to us and asking our names, ages, and where we were from. And so we began to become acquainted, not just we and the Mother, but all of us, because, although we lived near each other, we didn't even know each other's names. In this way, our community was formed: we started to become acquainted. At first, they taught us to look at how we were living our Christianity, first, in ourselves, then in our families, and then in our neighbors. And we realized that we were not true Christians, as we claimed; we were not Catholics. We were 'very Catholic,' but didn't even know the name of our next door neighbor. We didn't know if someone was sick. That was not real Christianity, but we have been learning there."

"I remember that at first our community consisted only of women. We met at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. We then began some exercises when Father gave them to us, he urged us to form groups. Then we contacted several women. Later, the husbands joined too, and we formed a community of couples which has been operating with some faults, but has tried to make progress.

"The nuns kept inviting people, house by house. At first, the groups were very large. Now they consist of fewer persons, but we have taken steps with reflection, celebrations, commitment and struggle."

"Our community came into existence in a makeshift way, without realizing that some day it would be a community group. We have been becoming more aware."

"The nuns started the CEB's. The first people who responded went, like them, from door to door, inviting the women. 'Come along, ladies, let's meet, because we have many needs in the colonia and we have to unite in order to gain anything; we must be united to defend ourselves. We saw the problems that we had, and they read us a text from the Bible, and taught us how to reflect properly, because we didn't know. We arrived very ignorant of all

such things, and we didn't know why. We arrived so shy, some from farms, others from towns, and others from right here! None of us had relations with other people, much less other groups. We were not even inclined to talk, because it seemed to us that, if we spoke, at best everything we said would not be put correctly. And so, we started the communities. The religious were very patient with us. They taught us to see the word of God. And we did understand everything that they told us, but we didn't participate, for lack of confidence and ignorance. Little by little, we lost the fear of speaking, to the point where now we are inclined to speak even with the governor."

"Our community was founded by the nuns and Father X. They are the founders of the CEB's here. At first, some people also came from other colonias in the city to help us form the groups and to give us courses. A married couple came to our group. At that time, the group consisted of about 30 persons, but we think that many joined just because of their interest in the gifts that the gentlemen brought us, especially at Christmas. When they stopped coming, the group was reduced to about eight, who are those of us continuing up until now, but very willingly, and with great desires of working."

"Our group was founded at the invitation of one of the nuns who were working on the school. She asked us why we didn't form a community of the parents in our block. And she encouraged us to form it. We started inviting people, but since that didn't catch on very quickly, it was hard for us to form the group. In the end, we had a few parents left, but others have joined, and the group has remained stable. We are progressing here, little by little. Depending on the problem that we have, that is what we look at during our meeting. We analyze what guidance we can obtain; we look for a reading of the word of God; we comment on it; and we set some commitment for the week."

Some of us recall very personal experiences:

"I didn't know anything about religion, and I was sad, when they asked me questions that I couldn't answer. But they persisted with me, and I went the first time, and liked it a little...and a second time, and I liked it more. The third time, I stayed."

"The communities didn't attract me. A woman invited me and, since I had nothing to do that day, not even watch television, I went, although without any enthusiasm. And we are still here."

"A woman invited me, but I didn't like it, because I am very stupid, and I was ashamed not to be able to answer. Little by little, we could say what we felt, even though it may have been very little. We have great spirit and enthusiasm, and God must help us. In these groups, we are the poor, as in the time of Christ; for those who followed him were the poor. But we poor sometimes also make excuses for not serving God our Lord."

"The day after my arrival, I lost one of my children, and the neighbors told me that the nuns could help me find him. I went and they took care of me, helping me to make it known that I had lost the child.

"When we found him, they invited me to join the community groups. I didn't even know what a community was. They said to me: 'Let's go to the community.' Well, we went! I began to enjoy it. They read a reading, and commented on it, and I began to realize that the people were different from those in the barrios from which I came; because there one didn't even know the people next door, much less those on another street. I entered and I was pleased at how people took an interest in someone who had just arrived in the colonia. That is how I began in the community groups."

It has been the Lord who has called us, some first, and others later; some in one way, and others in another. And we have all been meeting each other on this path.

In our communities, we have been accompanied and supported by the nuns who came to live among us from the beginning: our first parish priest (not like those who came after, as we shall observe later), and the nuns who were in the colonia for several years. All of them, besides loving, understanding, and encouraging us, have taught us to understand the word of God.

We have been finding this word in the Bible, in our brothers, in our commitment, in every step that we take in daily life, in events. It has made us realize that God is not pleased by injustices. We have discovered it as a living word that is calling us at every moment.

Our advisers have given us training in many areas: an understanding and use of the Bible, analysis of reality, politics, human relations, coordination of groups, and some practical skills. They have accompanied and organized us; they taught us the path. In this way, we have been able to grow in awareness, just as when Jesus put mud on the blind man, and then he could see reality as it was. For this reason, now we let ourselves be led by anything that they tell us.

During all these years, we have shared life, problems, and going along with the CEB's of other colonias. We are happy that there are increasingly more who decide to follow Jesus around here. We have had solidarity in problems, and we have shared experiences. It has always encouraged us to know that we are not alone, that there are many of us traveling along this path.

Together, we have learned to preach the Gospel, to denounce the injustices committed against the people. We do so organized with the groups and individuals around us, enlightening ourselves with the word of God. We have also learned to admit mistakes and wrong steps made by each one of us and the communities.

Many things have been changing among us and around us: we have more faith in Jesus, and we let ourselves be guided by him. We know how to understand each other better, and to coexist better with others. We view the family and the neighbors with more love. We are more aware that many problems beset our colonia, and that we can only solve them with the mutual help of all. We no longer have a blindfold over our eyes, and we now know what man wants and what God doesn't want. We have been losing fear, and we have more spirit for fighting against all injustices. We have learned to defend our rights. In short, our way of living, thinking and acting has become different, because we are trying to live the Gospel.

If we are asked today what the CEB's are, from our experience we can say that they are the foundation of the Church; in other words, the people, the alienated, the downtrodden, those of us struggling united to achieve what the Lord wants: that we be only one. We are the living Church itself, which is awakening; the Church in motion, a missionary and liberating Church. We are the people of God who are trying to awaken.

Have we had difficulties? Of course! There are neighbors who treat us as "communists" and "gossips," to whom we have tried to explain the way things are. We have invited them to come and see what we are doing, and to join the groups. We try to help them with what they need. We also try not to pay attention to the criticism.

Another problem has been with our own families, because sometimes they don't understand what we are doing; they don't listen to what we are trying to teach them; they don't think as we do. We always ask God to help us overcome the obstacles confronting us, especially when they try to prevent us from attending the groups and participating in the community activities. We try to help them to understand this path.

We have had many difficulties with the Protestant brothers. The sects are increasing more each day, and they have a different way of viewing things. They want us to change our religion, and since people are ignorant of the word of God, they accept them. We have tried to guide people, talking with them, and reading the Bible as God wishes, in relation to our reality. We have prepared ourselves somewhat not to let ourselves be deceived, and we have asked God to give us great strength to progress.

But the most serious problem that has marked our community life has been the lack of understanding on the part of the parish priests, since our first curate left, up until now.

Our first parish priest was a good priest for the colonia that was beginning. He suffered the discomforts just as we did. He always cooperated with the nuns and the religious clergy in the work of the communities. The parish was like a center uniting all the groups, so that we could be like a family. We all collaborated enthusiastically, and collected funds for the church construction. Father thanked us for anything, even if it were 20 or 1 pesos. He visited our homes, advised us, and encouraged us when we were troubled,

not knowing what path to take. The people were very happy, and the entire colonia was very lively. He and the other priests celebrated Masses in the barrios. Where there were communities, the Eucharist was celebrated, and the whole barrio took part. All those of us who lived nearby attended those Masses, and, if, for example, we saw someone to whom we had made a bad face, at that time we wished him peace and exchanged our remarks. It was very nice!

The first difficulty that we met with in our parish was the change in parish priests. When another Father came, there was a very difficult situation: he started to ignore the CEB's; he himself began treating us as communists, saying that these groups made no sense, that the people should meet only in the parish, and that we had no reason to leave it so as to reflect in any way. He even told us that we were groups who sat on the street saying unimportant things, and that we didn't read the Gospel.

We held dialogue with him, and showed him our records of reflection, and, at that very time, he was convinced of some things. But he set the parish groups against the CEB's and many people became confused; the parish was left divided, and we all suffered greatly, as if the division had come from there. We continued seeking dialogue and closeness and, in time, many of those who at first had believed him were convinced that he was not correct in what he was saying about us, and there began to be more understanding.

While, at first, when we were all working united and with the parish priest's support, we felt that we were the Church, in any case we still feel that we are; because now, with what we have learned, we don't feel outside, even though the parish priest would like to throw us out. In any case, we know that we are a Church.

We believe that these problems have come from the lack of understanding of what the CEB's are and what they are doing, on the part of the curate and others. The CEB's are thought to be working on something other than what the Church is. They need to be closer to what is being done.

When our parish priest was replaced again, we had great hope that things would change, but another one with the same ideas arrived. It seems as if these parish priests, when they receive the parish, received the church but not the people. They need to be closer to our lives, to our problems. They seem to think that the Church is just what is inside the church building.

Our greatest sorrow is that they have stopped saying Mass in the barrios. For about 3 years, they haven't been allowed by the parish. We are sad, because we need them very much. How much they nourished our faith! They gave us strength and courage. We celebrated there as a community what we were living, our struggles, and the gains made. There, we would entrust our needs to God together, and pray for each other, for everyone. How much they motivated the CEB's themselves and the residents! But, in the parish, they claim that if we want those Masses it is out of mere whim for attending church.

What have we done in the face of all this? We haven't gone about publicizing the problems here and there; rather, we have formed commissions to go and hold dialogue with our parish priests, and state things to them; to tell them that we are not acting apart from the word of God, but it has been the light for our continuing on this path. We have invited the curate and the other Fathers from the parish to our meetings, but they are not interested in attending. We have also sent them the petitions from many other people who want a real service to the people from the parish, and who feel that they are not receiving it. Up until now, we have not achieved anything in that dialogue; we have had no response. But we'll continue trying, for the good of all of us here. We are pained by the comments made about the parish, because, although we may have difficulties, we CEB's are a Church and, as a Church, it pains us to hear what people are saying.

When the parish has asked us for some help, for example, in coordinating groups for missions that have been organized, we have always gladly cooperated, together with the parish groups. Some closeness has been occurring with some of the latter because, besides the participation in common action, we have invited them to celebrations, meetings, and social gatherings, at which we have become acquainted.

The lack of support from the parish has made the work in the colonia slower. The nuns had to leave after several years of an unfailing commitment to us. We think that the lack of acceptance of their work by the parish had a great deal to do with this departure. How much their leaving here pained us! The nuns remained alone so as to encourage us and travel with us. Their work in the CEB's is by no means recognized or supported by the parish.

Over the past few years, that have been so difficult, some groups have become discouraged. Others of us have managed to forge ahead and, although there have been obstacles, we have not weakened. We consider as an accomplishment the fact that, with the help of God, we are increasingly aware, despite what is said about us, that we are not independent of the Church, but part of it.

What has nourished our community life most?

First of all, God himself. With his help, we contribute some of our share to make our faith grow and remain strong. His word, read and commented on at our meetings, and discovered in living, is our strength and our light. Therefore, we know that, as servants of the Lord, we are working to carry out the mission that he has entrusted to us; we are working for his Kingdom.

The word of God, especially in the Gospels, has taught us to look at ourselves as brothers; it has opened up for us the path of truth, by removing the blind-folds from our eyes, and has put our steps on the path of Jesus. From this we have learned to consider the problems of others and to commit ourselves to them. It has also helped us to give up some vices that we had.

The Eucharist, celebrated as community in the barrios, has been, as we said before, one of the most important foods of our faith. We don't have it now, but we have not lost hope, and we'll continue insisting until we achieve it again.

The spiritual exercises for each year and the experience of a group of us who managed to do the exercises in ordinary life, directed by a priest and by three of our nuns have given us the opportunity to renew our spirit, to change within, and to try to respond with enthusiasm to the call of Jesus to commit ourselves more to our brothers.

The participation in social gatherings and meetings with the CEB's from other parts of the city, the diocese, the region, and the country has always given up an impetus to forge ahead. In sharing experiences and realizing that other comrades have had worse problems and have overcome them, our faith has increased; because we think that, if they were able, with the help of God and unity among all, we too can do so. How nice it is to see so many, so many of our brothers from near and far acting in the same way!

If, here in the colonia, the commitment, affection and advice of our first parish priest, and other priests and nuns , have sustained and encouraged us, how much faith and hope it also gives us to see that more and more bishops and priests in the country are supporting the CEB's, and are now participating in them! At first, when the communities began, there was only backing from Medellin; then came Puebla and other documents supporting us, as well as documents from certain bishops in various places. Without that support, we would most likely have stopped, because there was much still lacking, and there are some who are opposed and refuse to join. As was said at a meeting: the CEB's are not a movement, but rather the Church in motion, the living Church. The parishes should inform the people of this.

How do we stand today, after 15 years of traveling together?

In the first place, our colonia has grown extraordinarily. And although we have achieved many things insofar as public services are concerned, very serious problems have appeared and are increasing, such as the disintegration of the family, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Our young people, sometimes so disoriented, worry us. We are sincerely trying to seek a solution to these serious situations.

We feel that people, in general, no longer have the fighting spirit that existed at the beginning. As soon as they achieve what is most essential, they become comfortable, and do no more work. However, some recent experiences have proven to us that, at the time of a problem affecting everyone, we know how to have solidarity and organize to demand our rights. Just like the little seed that was planted:when necessary, it yields fruit. At present, even the people who have left us because of their work or for other reasons remember that there are communities, and people who can give a little more guidance because they have worked on the struggles more. Therefore, they come to the communities, as if to seek advice and encouragement: Will this be all right? Should we go ahead? This is how we have achieved, if not everything, at least some of what we have needed.

Today, with the economic crisis, many, the majority, are poorer than before; and, at best, some are richer.

Our communities are united. Some work more, others less. But there we go, supporting one another. Some are a little discouraged, but when a group wants to become reduced or weakened, we invite others, and so it seems that the little tree is still putting out branches. The groups that have been here since the beginning are like a tree that seems dry, but the trunk is well rooted, and is putting out little shoots once in awhile. Therefore, the tree will not die.

It is very necessary for us to encourage one another. Sometimes, we leave, for fear of a commitment; because these groups are no longer "God and I," but rather "God and others." The CEB groups are groups of commitment, and action. If there is something wrong in the colonia, they go about organizing to see what can be done. We cannot remain just reflecting on the word of God; but we must act, work, and commit ourselves. And it is for this reason that many intend to remain in the CEB's. There are people who start with enthusiasm, so long as there is no mention of commitment or the problems that we have. There are people who leave because they feel that the area of the Gospel should not be mixed with politics. It is very comfortable to come and listen, but with the time that we have, we see and think that it is not right for us to sit looking and listening; but rather, that we are capable of opening our hearts to help other people; we are capable of thinking and doing so. It is difficult to remain in these groups; but we know that it is God's business. There are people who go off to other groups, because there they do nothing but pray; but they don't work.

We have very few nuns now, because they are needed elsewhere. When they go, we feel very sad; but then we think that they are like Christ, that they must go to evangelize the entire world, and they have left us now because we are already capable of making progress. They arrived here when we knew nothing; they awakened us, and now they have gone somewhere else where, as in our case then, they need these people, even though it grieves us greatly. Their letters, visits, and greetings make us very happy and encouraged.

We want to forge ahead, to be more responsible about our commitment, to be always alert to what we need as a people; having relations between one colonia and another, with the CEB's, and with their advisers, who also take an interest in us, back us, and give us the help that we are not receiving from our parish.

We wish to continue in solidarity with our brothers in Central America and elsewhere, who need us and who ask for our aid. We are always interested in the news that reaches us, and we cooperate with our prayers, with letters of support, and with some money that we are able to collect when we organize activities to benefit them.

This is, in very simple form, our experience: the history of the years in which we have shared our lives, common problems, struggles, and hopes. This has been our path as a Church, in the Grassroots Church Communities, in the service of the Kingdom of God, and in the service of our brothers.

Falling and lifting ourselves up, trusting in the Lord, and also in each other, realizing that we are poor, sinful, irascible, ignorant, weary people, beaten by those who are strong, we want to follow Jesus and commit ourselves with charity and love, trusting in God and in our Most Blessed Mother.

CEB's in a suburban colonia.
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